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The PASSING SHOW

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Where the SPIRIT *of* ENGLAND *Still Lives . . .*

"Industry left Kersey lovelier than ever."

WHEN I was told the house in Suffolk was haunted, I wasn't surprised. Quite a long time ago, A.D. 1180 to be exact, "certain fishers took in their nets a fish, having the shape of a man in all points, which fish was kept in the castle six months and more. He spake not a word: all manner of meats he did gladly eat, but most greedily raw fish when he had pressed out the juice. At length, being not well looked to, he stole to the sea, and never was seen after."

My ghosts similarly "spake not a word," but my friend, who owns the house, and has a more sensitive ear than I have, frequently hears their voices, the friendly voices of a man and woman talking in quiet, happy undertones always at three o'clock in the morning, always in the same place. I was awake always at three o'clock, but heard nothing. I wish I had.

Happy ghosts are uncommon. But I did confess to my host that once in my life, and once only, on the west coast of the island of Lewis, in the farthest Hebrides, I heard, for about fifteen seconds, unmistakable faery music, like the sound of a harp being played very quietly.

Whereupon he sat down at the piano, saying, "Listen to the faery music that I heard once in the heart of Dartmoor." He played the identical music that I had heard in the Western Isles.

"Mine was softer than that," I said when he finished. "But the same music."

Ghosts may well lurk in these Suffolk houses. They have, in many instances, scarcely been disturbed these five hundred years. The staircase to my bedroom was made of solid oak, placed there in the year 1400. The walls of every room were ribbed with vertical oak pillars and the ceilings were supported by horizontal oak beams.

The only part of the walls that was not timber was wattle and daub, called, in these parts, "pug."

The ancient forests of Suffolk must have been rich in oaks, to judge from the old houses that display hearts of oak, even when their faces suggest Georgian brick.

Even the barns have a wealth of woodwork and every church roof is not only massive, but also entirely oaken.

Nearly every cottage that I passed was protected with weatherboarding, and in one farm I visited even the pigs were provided with special wooden beds to keep them above the stone floor.

As I turned down a narrow, overgrown green bridle path marked "To Morning Dawn" (Suffolk has given England a fine lead by sign-posting all her public footpaths) I heard a sharp whistle behind me and, looking back, saw a broad-shouldered, grey-moustached man of exceptionally erect carriage in corduroys, swinging along with a rectangular wooden box marked "Tomato Ketchup" in one hand and a lot of rabbit snares in the other.

He pointed through a gap in the hedge to a shepherd's caravan, wooden of course, with these words written on the door: "Home, the place where you grumble most and want to come back to most." Inside was a sewing machine with a treadle.

"It misses a woman," said my host. There were two guns, the ends of an iron bedstead, and a net that I mistook for a tennis net. It was a net all right, but it was not used for tennis.

Outside the hut he opened the case of tomato ketchup, and three pink-eyed, long, yellow-furred, evil ferrets poked their noses out this way and that. He took them out and threw one carelessly over his shoulder, while the other two nestled into his open shirt. Three bright-eyed little collies, "Fly, Bob and Floss," appeared from under what I took to be a carpenter's bench, but what was really an anvil. The man followed my gaze.

"I'm a blacksmith by trade," he said, laying one gun down by the side of the anvil, and shoving the three ferrets into a cage, where they set to instantly on a wild duck that was lying waiting for their teeth.

When I suggested taking his photograph, he surrounded himself with his gear for all the world like a big-game hunter. He insisted on releasing all three ferrets who, not sharing his desire for publicity, archly disappeared into the hedgerow instead of remaining on his shoulder.

He held the three dogs, two guns, nets, and snares, and then, in complete immobility, stood with pursed lips and head held back so far that it looked as if it would crack in the neck.

On leaving our host we retraced our steps from "Morning Dawn" to the high road, whose hedges were laced with cow-parsley, and at intervals tall, tired men with bundles came past, usually in pairs, one on either side of the road ("looking for cigarette-ends," suggested my host), on their way from work-house to workhouse. There was one little old woman pushing a pram.

(*continued on next page*)

CONTINUING

Where the SPIRIT *of* ENGLAND...

"This exquisite hamlet that lies sleeping on two hillsides." Left: The old windmill at Holton, Suffolk.

"She's always either coming or going," I was told by the man who owned the haunted house. "She's a feature of the road."

After a little silence he went on, "There's no unemployment in Suffolk to speak of."

I could hardly believe my ears. I have travelled up and down the English countryside now for years, and that was the first time since the depression I had heard anyone claim for a county immunity from the general sickness.

Certainly when they built their churches and houses there can have been little unemployment. The wealth of the wool merchants gave the Cotswolds the glory of their manor houses and churches, and it was the wealth from the wool that raised these mighty flint church towers of Suffolk, even larger and more imposing than the churches of the Cotswolds.

First in Suffolk you notice the timbered houses, then the grandeur of the flint churches, and then the Englishness of the landscape. It was by no accident that Gainsborough and Constable came from Suffolk. They owed everything to the countryside that bred them. It is still completely unspoilt.

In the first church that I tried to get into, Wiston, I had to open a six-barred gate to get into the village or hamlet, cross a buttercup green, and then found the church locked. When I did get inside, I found that they use a barrel-organ for organ, so their choice of hymns is limited.

When I asked an inn-keeper in Nayland for food he seemed too surprised to answer.

"We don't sell food," he said, and then a bright idea having struck him, added, "You've just time to cross the road to the grocer; he shuts from one till two. You can buy butter and cheese there, and eat it here."

Admirable advice, which ensured freshness not always to be found in the English inn that does cater for visitors. I returned with half a pound of ham, a new loaf, half a pound of butter and cheese, and six bananas, and listened as I ate and drank to stories of Jerusalem in war time from the gas-poisoned veteran of 1914 who runs the pub, but expects no visitors.

Just above Nayland I found the five-storeyed church tower of Stoke, with two rows of quite perfect Tudor timber and plaster cottages, under the over-hanging beams of which the martins were peeping from their nests of dried mud quite unperturbed by the unaccustomed stranger beneath.

And in the green valley below, lying peacefully half hidden among the trees, I passed the scene of the Murder in the Red Barn, the home of Maria Martin, the least likely place for a murder that ever I set eyes on. The murderer usually leaves an ineradicable if unanalysable atmosphere of ugliness and unrest behind. But not at Polstead. Maria Martin's house still stands, and her grave may still be seen. Suffolk's belief in the supernatural is splendidly justified by the fact that the place of concealment of Maria's body was revealed to her stepmother in a dream, and this led to Corder's arrest and execution.

Murder left no imprint on Polstead; industry left Kersey lovelier than ever. That kind of twilled woollen cloth with the diagonally ribbed appearance that we call Kersey came originally from this exquisite hamlet, that lies sleeping on two hillsides, with its feet in a watersplash called the River Brett. Here I saw an old brick Dutch gabled house with the date 1490 over the porch, the ancient sign of a horse's tail-hairs hanging out from below the roof of the veterinary surgeon's house, the rare chequer-board device of black and white lozenges under the gables of two cottages, and the sealed-up windows of the cottagers who would not pay Elizabeth's window tax.

I saw a donkey harnessed to a water-tank cart at Brent Eleigh, the next valley, and a boy ladling water out of the stream to carry to the neighbouring farms.

And so I came by way of the buttercup meadows to Lavenham, where house after timbered house surprises by the beauty and richness of its gables, the curves of its wind-braces, its orieled windows, its overhanging beams, and, in one instance, by an oak wicket door in a fine arched gateway.

In a tailor's shop opposite the timber Guildhall a bass violin testified to one of the tailor's hobbies. His other passion in life was to establish the claims of the seventeenth Earl of Oxford as the writer of Shakespeare's plays.

In this he showed himself a loyal son of Suffolk.

"Why should all the visitors go to worship at a false shrine at Stratford," he said, "when they ought to be paying homage to de Vere in Lavenham?"

Indeed, to judge from the portrait of this hand-somely dressed young peer, he was capable of laying claim to having written Bacon's essays as well, if not of having secretly married the Queen. And after all there is authority for the fact that he had the courage to call Sir Philip Sidney a "puppy" on the Whitehall tennis court, and schemed to murder him afterwards. He tried to make Italian fashions of the toilet popular at the Court, and he married Burghley's daughter. All this gives him at least as much right to the authorship of Shakespeare's plays as anybody else, except, perhaps, Shakespeare. But when I tried to pin the tailor down to his reasons he took refuge in two.

"He had travelled a lot," he said, "and he mentions places round Lavenham."

Lavenham, as the centre of the Flemish weaving industry of the Middle Ages, boasts even more timber houses of great antiquity and beauty than I had seen anywhere else, but its crowning achievement is not the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, nor its horse-hair weaving, which still goes on in the cottages. It is its church, which stands on the top of a hill, and is one of the finest perpendicular churches in the land, its flint tower standing 141 ft. high and its tall nave of six bays lightened by a fine line of clerestories.

The whole length of the church is just under 200 ft. This was the home of Jane Taylor, who wrote "Twinkle, twinkle, little Star," which has, I believe, never been attributed to the seventeenth Earl of Oxford.

Long Melford, which lies next door to Lavenham, is an even more attractive village. On one side of the village lies the great park and huge brick Elizabethan home of the Hyde Parkers, one of whom was one of Nelson's admirals at Trafalgar. This house has mitred turrets and is surrounded by a moat.

There is another Elizabethan moated hall just at the entrance to the village, once the home of the Cloptons.

More interesting by far than these great houses was to me, a lover of George Borrow, the "great house" where Isopel Berners claimed to have been born, the workhouse at Long Melford. You remember the passage in "Lavengro" where Borrow lays out the famous "Flaming Tinman" with the "long right" that made Isopel cry out, "Hurrah for Long Melford!"

Ever since as a boy I read that amazing farrago of fact and fiction I have wanted to see Isopel Berners' home.

I took the tall-chimneyed almshouse at the top of the green to be the "great house," and it was easy to see why she would remember it.

It bordered on to the churchyard of a church even grander than the church of Lavenham. It has nearly a hundred windows and is nearly 200 ft. long. In the Lady Chapel, once used as a school, I saw the old multiplication table painted on the wall, and found myself wondering whether Belle found numbers as exciting as Borrow's efforts to teach her languages or as difficult to learn. On the floor of the church I saw many brasses of lovely medieval ladies with slender bodies and smiling lips, slyly looking up at the majestic marble monuments of solemn fat knights of later ages surrounded by kneeling humorless children.

I finished up at Sudbury, another rich weaving town full of churches and old gabled timbered houses, in one of which was born, just over two hundred years ago, the gay artist who painted with such amazing life-likeness the stately ladies of the eighteenth century.

No one at this time of day is likely to dispute the immortality of Gainsborough's "Duchess of Devonshire," "Miss Linley," or "Mrs. Robinson as Perdita." But this painter of over two hundred portraits was also a supreme painter of Suffolk landscapes. As a boy of ten, this Sudbury wool merchant's son had already sketched every tree and cottage and possible cloud effect round his home.

So at fourteen he was allowed to study art in London. At nineteen he fell in love with Margaret

(*continued on next page*)

The river Blythe at Walberswick, near Southwold, Suffolk.

Burr, painted her, married her when he was twenty, and settled in a house at Ipswich, the rent of which was £6 a year. His wife was the natural daughter either of the Duke of Bedford or an exiled Stuart prince.

When he was thirty-two he set up a studio in Bath and immediately became the fashion. He raised his prices from 8 to 100 guineas a portrait and fifteen years later bought himself a mansion in Pall Mall.

The following day I set out for the coast, which entailed going through Colchester, where I was in time to see a number of goodly young pigs being put up to auction and sold at not much less than £3 each.

As I leaned over a pen containing a score or so of pleasant young calves, I said to my neighbour, who was smoking an expensive cigar, "What breed are these?" He looked at me as though he thought I ought to be in an asylum. People don't usually ask questions of that sort in markets.

"They're for milk," he said.

"What difference does that make?" I asked.

"All the difference. For milk you want mixed breeds, and the more you mix them the better."

At the top of the town I saw the great ruins of the famous castle. Now I don't know how much you know of Colchester. I knew vaguely that it was once a famous Roman city, the home of Cymbeline, Caractacus, and old King Cole, but I did not know that where these ruins once stood there used to stand the only Roman temple in Britain, the temple of Claudius.

When I told the smiling, pretty girl, who appeared to be the custodian of the castle, that I wanted to see all the high spots in five minutes, she wasn't rude, she wasn't flippant, she was kind. Two hours later I came downstairs to thank her.

"If you'd told me what to see in an hour I should have been here till the next Roman occupation," I said.

"It's a hard place to leave," she agreed.

It certainly is.

But I was for the coast. The sun was shining, so I cut short my passion for Rome and went on by way of the serried masts of the barges in the Hythe, by way of the great walk of Wivenhoe Park, and so eventually, after a maze of winding roads, arrived at Brightlingsea, whose threshold is guarded by a giant flint church tower that stands about a mile out of the town.

The streets of Brightlingsea are many and unimpressive, but suddenly you emerge at the Hard, and all is well again. The wind was freshening. As I wandered down the slip-way, more and more boats splashed to and fro. On the opposite shore, about three hundred yards across the creek, rose the bungalows of the beach. The Colne estuary was well filled with white steam yachts, and red-sailed wherries and trawlers came round the headland into the creek.

I followed a trawler coming in and went up to the quayside to see him unload. When I got there I found myself looking 20 ft. down on the deck of a trawler, where a burly blue-eyed fisherman, in blue jumper and waders, was measuring boiled shrimps with a two-gallon measure.

"Three and a half," he said. "Four hours' work for seven gallons of shrimps. What a life!" Then he laughed gaily. I nearly fell in hauling up the seven gallons on the long boat-hook. A man on a bicycle was waiting to carry them away. "They've got to be on the London train in ten minutes," he said.

These fishermen run their communications so close that the shrimps have to be boiled as they sail home. Speaking an English that for clarity, lucidity, and exactitude of phrase I have never heard surpassed, the trawler's owner told me that in the east wind the water becomes too clear for fishing.

"You can do nothing," he said, as he disembowelled a skate and washed down the deck. But I thought of something to do.

I went to the public bar of the "Anchor," and there discovered further that the Essex fisherman is not only a perfect curator of the King's English, but that he has also retained an independence that is not to be found everywhere.

I offered the men at my table a pint. They all refused, all accepting a half-pint. In ten minutes the tankards were being replenished, mine among them.

Then I went on to an unforgettable afternoon in the Constable country. I had been dodging about the Stour valley for a day and a half. Now I made a bee-line for Constable's birthplace at East Bergholt, only to find that where his house once stood there are now tea-gardens. There were people looking at the church bells, that have to be rung from a wooden perforated cage on the ground rather like a dove-cot. When the tower fell in they never rebuilt it.

But my mind was on Constable. A deep, dark green, high-banked lane led steeply down from the village to Flatford Mill, and here quite suddenly I found myself looking for the first time in actuality at all the homely, lovely English scenes that Constable had interpreted for all time on canvas.

There were punts and rowing boats on the Stour, and on an arched wooden footbridge that spanned it boys were swinging.

In a yellow wallflower garden on the waterside men and women were taking tea. Two small boys were fishing from the edge of the lock, and a lugubrious man opposite the mill told me that under the opposite bank there were grand salmon trout. A wise fish, for the other bank is reserved for artists who do not fish.

Tea over (and an excellent tea it was), I wandered down the tow-path with half a dozen white and two black friendly ducks. I heard a woodpecker tapping and a cuckoo calling over the bush meadows. Periwinkles were popping out their blue heads on the opposite bank to see the passers-by. Swallows in scores went dipping merrily and quickly past, twittering with delight. The water from two weirs kept up a cheerful music.

Lilac and laburnum in full flower bent lovingly over the river, and there was cow parsley everywhere.

A girl and her lover sat almost smothered in it on a tree trunk, and the ducks, scenting generosity, climbed out of the water to greet them.

I crossed over to the other side and walked down the lane past the mill, past the timbered, gabled, red-tiled manor house, and past Willy Lott's cottage, to find the caretaker. He took me over the mill, in every room of which swallows were flying excitedly about.

"All artists can stay in the house and paint; the studio's free," he said.

He kept on opening windows to show me a different aspect of the stream. And then he walked me back towards Willy Lott's cottage.

Mr. Mais holds the ferrets while the man-of-the-fields poses for a photograph.

"There's the scene of 'The Hay-Wain,'" he said.

But I was lost in a mingled scent of night-scented stock and wild thyme, coming up from the gardens. He unlocked Willy Lott's cottage door. I walked in and out of many timbered rooms.

"But this is exactly like Shakespeare's birthplace," I said.

"It was built at the same time," he said, "and in a similarly wooded country."

Wherever I looked out I saw before me endless green meadows, rich trees, more lilac and laburnum, oaks and elms and beeches, tall, slender poplars, and a shining, winding water.

"In eighty-eight years Willy Lott only left this house for three nights," he went on.

What a sensible, restful age. Why should a man who had found beauty ever want to leave it?

Up to the mill the water is, apparently, tidal from Harwich, and ships' timbers were taken up for building these houses.

John Constable, the miller's son, of East Bergholt, will have been dead a hundred years next March, but to me he seemed very much alive on that sunny, sweet day of May. All was as he knew and loved it. All except the clouds. He was a great lover of cloud effects, and for once Suffolk was cloudless.

If ever it was given to man to interpret the English spirit exactly, it was given to Constable, but the English spirit has fled from Charlotte Street. It remains intact, inviolate at Flatford Mill. On the banks of the Suffolk Stour you will find England still.

Riddle *of the* DEVOTED Sphinx

THE tall, lean shape that was but a shadow in the shadows, flicked a hand. Another shadow leapt like a panther and the armed Tarbashi at the door went down without a sound. The lean shape slid over him and through the door like an eddy of smoke, two lamp-black Buckra at his heels. The Protector of the Faithful within got one glimpse of an eagle fierce face and swiped largely at it with his scimitar. The face grinned, ducked the blade and two steel arms caught the man and tossed him into a corner, where one of the Buckra with blunt knees and a sharp knife knelt on him, commanding silence.

A vast Nubian eunuch leaving a chamber of the inner court gasped at the sight of the lean man and made motions of war. A hard foot took him where he bulged most and by the time he had recovered enough to sit up, the lean one had vanished into the chamber and the other Buckra stood at its door, grinning at him—over pistol sights. Whereat the eunuch began to sweat cold. He had been ordered to guard what was in that chamber with his life.

The lean man had paused just long enough to straighten his turban and expose the glories of an orange *kraftan*—he had a neat taste in dramatic flourishes—then, with his hand on the jewelled hilt of a pistol, he swept aside the leather door curtain and entered the room.

The woman pouring out tea looked up with a certain amount of interest.

Just that.

A bizarre and dangerous gentleman with the air of a highly accomplished pirate and the look of a laughing Lucifer had just wiped out such guards as stood between her and one of the most notorious murder communities of Africa, in order to invade her presence, pistol in hand, and she merely tilted her teapot just enough not to spill it, as she looked at him.

He blinked, but not even the tropic stench and heat of Tauri Massi prevented the woman's Homeric absurdity from being real. There she stood: the small, smooth, neat, earnestly "refeened" working model of all that was strictly proper in the "best" suburban wives. She even had a crochet-edged teacloth on the kerosine case that made her table.

The white teeth flashed sardonically in the gipsy face as the lean man bowed.

"Your hired girl forgot to announce me," he said. "I am Savaran."

It was a name to make all Africa blench. She did not blench. She put down her teapot and gently foraged in a basket on the mud diwan beside her.

"I thought it might be you," she said in her best party voice.

"And you," he said, "are the lady who went to Port Sudan in search of me?"

"Yes. . . . Do sit down."

"You also followed me to Korfri on the Congo, and on to Tirsherifen seven hundred miles north, and—oh, yes, you enquired for me at Mottomari on the Atlantic in between."

"Yes," she nodded and hesitated, looking at him with appealing eyes.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Do you take milk—or none?" she murmured.

He collapsed on the diwan with a crack of laughter. "You are unique. You stagger even Savaran."

He gazed at her, baffled, as the race of men since Adam has gazed at Mona Lisa, their wives and the Sphinx.

"What is behind you?"

"I don't quite follow. . . . Sugar? One or two lumps?"

"Four hundred," his fierce lips mocked. "I am asking why you hunt me? Why you have done this miracle, trailed Savaran through several thousand miles of jungle and swamp, shot a man or two and outfaced experiences that would give your nice, residential home circle community hysterics? What is the main-spring of you—love or hate?"

"Oh—my husband," she whispered.

"Is that really an answer or only an added complication to the riddle of the ages?" he demanded sardonically.

"I mean—I want you to rescue my husband, Mr. Savaran."

"You have dared five thousand miles of assorted hell just for—a husband?" he asked, his eagle glance kindling at a spirit so akin to his own.

"I had to. From what I've learnt you are the only man who can save him. He is in a desperate position, Mr. Savaran."

"He must be if even a woman like you cannot help him," he said largely.

"He is," she breathed. "He is a prisoner of the Ja-gna-gnana."

Even Savaran gaped at her then. The Ja-gna-gnana had that effect. If she had said: "My husband is held prisoner on the seventh floor down of hell," she could not have been more disturbing. Indeed, it was held that that remote and deadly tribe exceeded hell in vileness.

"I am sorry, Madam, but if your husband ever got into the hands of the Ja-gna-gnana he is already dead."

"No," she said huskily. "He is not dead. He got a letter out to me by a salt caravan six months ago. He was alive and being kept alive. They have never had a white captive before, and they treat him as a trophy."

"I've never heard of a white getting among them. How did they take your husband?"

"He was exploring that district," she told him.

"An explorer?" he asked, surprised, for he thought he knew all the breed. "What is his name?"

"Oh!" she was taken aback. "I thought you knew. My name is Judith Marrion—Mrs. Charles Marrion."

"Charles Marrion? Never heard of him," he scowled. "What's he like?"

"Oh . . . oh, a big man. Not so tall as you but very strong. And—and blue eyes," she said.

"That's a drawback—I know of at least three blue-eyed big men in Africa," he said sardonically.

"Don't be funny," she shuddered, "please!"

"You're right," his face became harsh. "The Ja-gna-gnana can be no joking matter for him—or even Savaran."

"Yet who but Savaran can get him away from them?"

"I can't help sharing your views?" he said with a flash of white teeth. "And yet even Savaran may hesitate before the impossible."

"If you do not go," she said blankly, "I must."

"And by the living heaven," he said, his eyes shining admiration, "I believe you'd try."

"Something must be done. He's there, among those fiends—suffering and—and I am the only one he can turn to."

"To let you go would be signing your death warrant," he scowled. "And for nothing. He *must* be dead by now."

"I feel he isn't—in my bones," she answered. "He's strong and very—very tough. And even if he isn't alive I must know. Must! I have seven hundred English pounds, all I have in the world . . . if it isn't enough, if you won't go, then I must myself. I can't—can't rest until I *know*. I'm asking too much, perhaps. . . ."

"That is how you conquer Savaran," he said with his large gesture. "Such a devotion, daring the very stars, is what makes such great natures as yours and mine akin. I will go to the Ja-gna-gnana, and, if your husband is alive, I, Savaran, will bring him back to you."

◆ ◆ ◆

The spider-spare adventurer's journey through jungle, swamp and fever belt to that remote fastness of iron-flanked hills where the race of carbon-black, stork-shanked demons dwelt, matters little. It was merely infernal. He lost half his carriers from bushman arrows before he had gone a third of the way, and the remainder of his men bolted one night at the sound of an attacking tribe's war drums, leaving him half dead with fever. It was only by staggering in on the drummers and cowing them with his fierce eyes and more terrible pistol, that he escaped from the would-be murderers. He did it by forcing their king and his cabinet to act as bearers of the carrying chair in which he rested until he was strong enough again to be really dangerous. But the journey was full of trifles like that, and such incidentals were, after all, merely everyday to a man like Savaran; besides, the real unpleasantness of the trip began when he got among the Ja-gna-gnana.

He would not have lived among them five hours, for they have a prompt and fearful resentment of all strangers, had he not adopted the only two roles that make a man reasonably safe among such fiends. He went among them as a madman and a *fakir*.

The more primitive a people are the more awed they are by insanity. A lunatic is one who has been touched by the finger of Allah, and whose mind is what it is through constantly hobnobbing with spirits. There never was so mad a madman as Savaran, and added to it he clothed his lean, dark figure in a tattered *jibba*, plus all the wondrous filth of sacred bones, snake skins, monkey tails and amulets proper to a holy seer.

It was not the prettiest form of living. If the Ja-gna-gnana let him live for fear of the demons he might loose on them, they saw no reason why he should not pay for it by amusing them. They therefore made him court jester to hell. When there was lack of people to torture and life was dull, they would drag him forward to mow and gibber and dance.

Savaran being Savaran, lived through it all, but at times it was only the memory of Judith Marrion's great love and sublime devotion that saved him from becoming suddenly *sane* and, plucking his automatic from its hiding place among the amulets, wiping out as many of these fiends as possible in one grand, Savaranesque attempt to level up their cruelty.

Being Savaran, however, he never did forget the woman who was waiting so loyally on his pledged word. Not for a moment did he cease to hunt for Charles Marrion, and the mowing and fanatic figure that seemed to drift aimlessly about the iron valleys was following a set plan. And in time his genius and the woman's devotion had their reward. He found Charles Marrion—alive and in the salt gangs.

High up in the hills of Ja-gna-gnana was a big saline lake that was the chief wealth of the tribe.

The one defect of this source of riches is that to keep pace with the demand is killing work. The lake is remote, the conditions of life ghastly, and the harsh, bare mountains trap the sun so ferociously that no man can work there continuously and live for more than a few years. The Ja-gna-gnana overcome these defects by using their prisoners on the work, its deadliness giving it an additional charm for this purpose in their eyes.

Savaran learning in the plains that the famous white *roumi* captive was a member of the salt gang, set out for the lake. He was led to the man at once. This mad *fakir* with his frantic hatred of infidels—and that was why Savaran had spouted hate of infidels—promised a new line of torment for a prisoner who had become weak and unresponsive to the usual tortures.

Charles Marrion, because of his white skin, was a pampered prisoner. That is, when the horrible work brought him close to death he was taken off it and allowed to lie up in the sleeping camp until he was strong enough to be slowly killed again. He was undergoing such a spell of rest now, and Savaran, in the midst of a mob of his tormentors, found him lying under the tattered rag that was the only protection the slaves had against the elements.

SAVARAN AGAIN

by Douglas Newton

● "That is how you conquer Savaran," he said. "I will go to Ja-gna-gnana."

He lay so limp and ill that not even the kicks of the Ja-gna-gnana could stir him, and presently Savaran had to pretend to give way to a frenzy of rage, bending over him and cursing him in a score of languages. But one of the languages was English, and he said: "Marrion! Marrion! . . . Keep your nerve. . . . Oh, stench of infidel sin. . . . Marrion, do you hear? . . . I'm white. . . . Keep your nerve now. . . . Oh, spawn of Iblis. . . . I've come to save you. . . ."

The man heard. He rolled over, groaning as though to confront a new tormentor, blinked at Savaran with dazed eyes—then opened them wide.

"Savaran!" he screamed. "God in Heaven—Savaran!"

But Savaran was already on top of him, clawing and mowing in crazy fury. And as the Ja-gna-gnana screeched in brutish laughter at such sport, he was snarling ferociously:

"Keep your mouth shut, Rod Barstow! Do you hear? Give nothing away! Your very life depends on it. . . ."

His own did too. Something queer had happened to his knight errant search. He knew Judith Marrion's husband after all—but not as Marrion.

He was Rod Barstow, a crook whom Savaran had most solemnly promised to shoot on sight at their next meeting.

◆ ◆ ◆

The Ja-gna-gnana, fearing for the life of their show captive, dragged him off the swooning Barstow at last, and Savaran spent an evening being baited by the salt guards and asking himself whether the discovery absolved him from further heroic folly or whether his word to Judith Marrion was still binding.

Charles Marrion, or Rod Barstow, was the last man he wished to save from anything. He was one of the world's meanest efforts; a big, genial man who would stop at no filth to steal a dollar. It was for rotting a tribe Savaran had been interested in, with dope, that the bizarre adventurer had sworn to kill him.

He was, in fact, better dead. On the other hand there was Judith Marrion. Obviously she did not know what her husband was, how could so sweet and simple a creature even guess? And then, hadn't the brute married her under another name? No, he was probably at his best with her, all that a husband should be, therefore what he actually was had no bearing on her. All she wanted was her apparently decent husband safe and back with her, and he, Savaran, who never broke his promise, had given his word to restore that husband. That clinched it. He would be as magnificent as Judith Marrion herself, kill his own feelings for the man and save him.

Barstow might have altered things by betraying him, he was quite capable of it, but he didn't. He clutched at the slender chance of freedom despite his fear of Savaran. When the mad *fakir* came to revile him next day he snarled: "What's your game, Savaran?"

"How mere truth puzzles a crook," the lean man mocked amid curses in seven languages, for the benefit of the Ja-gna-gnana. "The game is precisely as stated yesterday. I'm here to get you away."

"Don't lie to me," the man quavered. "Is this some trick of revenge?"

"Would Savaran risk his neck on such a trick, knowing that the Ja-gna-gnana were doing all that was needed?"

"No . . . that's what I've been thinking," mumbled the man. "But—but you swore to shoot me?"

"The pleasure is postponed. Perhaps indefinitely. I have also sworn to rescue you."

"Sworn! Someone paid you?" Barstow gasped. "Who? The Trevarter gang?"

"Do I work in the sewers?" spat the eagle-fierce man. "Would mere money sway Savaran to dare so much? It was something nobler than you'll ever understand, Barstow—your wife!"

"God! Of course—you called me Marrion!" the man said, and lay still, watching Savaran with queer, questioning eyes. Savaran asked, guessing the man might be playing fox: "Are you too weak to walk?"

"How far? I'm pretty weak."

"To the hill road above the workings. It's the nearest I can hide mules."

"I might—if you could get me food," the man shuddered. "And a shot of millet spirit . . . and give me a day or two."

"I meant to," Savaran said. "You've got to watch me, Barstow, pick up my tricks. I'll be coming here all hours. Study my antics so that you can mimic me."

He leapt up with the abruptness of the madman, aimed a fanatic kick at Barstow and then shambled gibbering away. But he kept his word. He came back at all hours. Even during the night, to the anger of the other slaves whose sleep he disturbed. It was as though the mad *fakir* was drawn by a very magnetism of hate for this infidel. But there was cunning in his method. Not only was he able to slip food he had stolen to the weakened man, his irresponsible comings and goings became a commonplace.

But as he leant over to curse the infidel, Savaran dropped his jibba and turban with fierce injunctions to Barstow to get into them. Then he passed a stiff shot of native spirit, and, when it had steadied the man's shaking nerve, he handed over his whole collection of amulets.

"Tie these about you," he hissed. "When I give you my usual farewell kick I will stumble and fall. Spring up at once and take my place. Go gibbering off through the camp like me. You'll find two mules tethered between the first two big rocks on the left of the hill path. Wait by them until I come. Keep your nerve. It will be all right once you reach the mules."

(*continued on next page*)

Continuing

The Riddle *of the* Devoted Sphinx

He did all as said. Barstow in his robes and amulets and acting his mad mowings excellently, went off unchallenged. He gave the man ten minutes, then with the stealth of a woodsman slid through the camp after him. All went well. He got by the salt guards without a hint of suspicion. It was only when he was clear of immediate danger and running towards the mules that something went wrong.

He heard the clatter of hoofs ahead of him, caught a glimpse of two mules speeding up the path while the man on the back of one flailed both to a gallop.

Barstow was bolting, leaving his rescuer in the lurch.

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That was Barstow always, treacherous and cowardly in any crisis. Savaran found him two miles along the trail, lying where his mule had thrown him, snivelling in fear.

"I thought they'd got you," he whined. "You seemed so long and . . . and I could *feel* them coming after me."

"They won't even know you've gone until dawn to-morrow," Savaran said curtly, and yanked him to his feet.

"That's what I've been thinking," Barstow snuffled. "You can still get me back before they know. I'll be safe then. . . . Damn you, do you hear? I won't get on that mule. If they catch me it will be worse than ever. . . . I'm going back."

Savaran did not argue. He hit with a terrible swing to the brute's chin and then tied the insensible body across the mule. When Savaran promised to rescue a man, Savaran did it, even if he had to do it by force.

It was only when Savaran had once more accomplished the impossible and got them out of the Ja-gna-gnana country that Barstow began to see a ray of hope ahead and quietened down. Yet more than ever he took to studying his rescuer with that queer, speculative glance of his, and one day he asked:

"Why did Judith come to you?"

"Because she is a remarkable woman," the fierce smile flashed back. "Who else in all Africa could she have gone to?"

"She might have tried bribery through someone in a salt caravan," Barstow mumbled.

"And never seen you or the man or her money again," shrugged the lean adventurer. "There are a score of ways she might have tried, but she had the instinct beyond ordinary women to know the only one that was sure."

"Ah, you were impressed by her cleverness?"

"By something bigger—her divine devotion."

"Devotion?" sniggered the man. "Devotion, eh?"

"Barstow," said Savaran grimly. "The balance between my twisting your neck, as I promised, and saving your life, as I also promised, depends on a featherweight. One sneer at that noble lady, your wife, and not even my word to her will save that neck."

Barstow cringed under the death in the bright eyes. Yet presently he said: "I wonder. . . . She didn't tell you my real name was Barstow?"

"Obviously—am I not here? Would I have given my word to save a rat like you even to such a woman as your wife? Does *she* even know that your name is Barstow?"

"She may," he frowned. "You never do know what she knows."

"If she knew would she have withheld it from me—a woman as simple and guileless as that?"

"That's the puzzler," scowled Barstow. "That's why I'm wondering."

He became very quiet and docile after that—and dangerous. When they reached the Yanni people and Savaran was able to use the money in his body-belt to hire carriers and gather stores for a caravan, Barstow spent much time hobnobbing secretly with the local medicine man. Also on the night before they marched he showed both a curious elation and an eagerness to press drink on Savaran by way of celebration. Or rather he did until after the third drink. Then he sprang up, swaying on his feet, his face green.

"My God!" he shouted. "What have you given me?"

"You know best," said Savaran with ferocious geniality. "What did the ju-ju man give you for me—that's what you've drunk."

Barstow fell to the floor, his limbs curiously rigid, and the spider-spare man bent over him. "What was it—a poison?" Barstow's lips framed a hoarse negative. "Oh, I thought as much—the-vine-that-kills-a-man's-legs-for-a-week. . . . Just long enough to let you get away from me, eh? Very fortunate really, it'll prevent you being a nuisance on the march. . . . Oh, and next time you plot with medicine men make sure they haven't daughters. This one has, a pretty little thing, and talkative."

Barstow continued the march helpless in a litter, yet Savaran overlooked one thing: that is, that years of practice under the eyes of slave drivers had made the man a master in malingering. One day rather more than a week later, the lean adventurer left him in camp, sure that he was still unable to stand upright. When he returned at nightfall he knew better. Barstow had vanished with all the carriers, arms and stores save for what Savaran and his two hunters had on them.

"They left an hour after we started on our hunt," said one of the hunters studying the tracks. "The other white *bwana* hurried them. See how his booted feet move here and there as he drives them. And he knows where he is going. This track leads to the Ba Lee River, and, reaching it, he can get canoes to take him up to Gongoda or down through the Riad country to McQuala on the Keef Coast, or even to the British Malaria Colony, which would be the way a white man would go."

"Not this white man," said Savaran grimly. "He goes to Gongoda."

He knew that for certain, knowing Barstow. Gongoda would be a haven of refuge for the fellow, because, thanks to the hate of its king, death waited for Savaran there. Also it was the nearest bolt hole by several weeks.

Once again Savaran stood and asked himself if it was worth risking a painful and protracted death for such a fellow. Reason said no, reason said that even Judith Marrion would be better rid of such a cur. . . . But Savaran was never a creature of reason. He had a vision of that quiet, trusting woman waiting with her sublime patience in McQuala. . . .

"We go to Gongoda," he said grimly.

◆ ◆ ◆

On the Ba Lee River he found that Barstow had gone up stream to hide among his deadly enemies as he had thought. Savaran paused only long enough to buy a canoe and a Hazramut trader's outfit, and went after him.

The Gongoda border line on the river was a swarm with canoes waiting to massacre him, for Barstow had passed word of his coming. Grinning fiercely he steered slap for where they were thickest, and standing up roared boldly:

"Way!—Way for Shentun the Hazrami. I have news for the king. Zavarani is trying to creep up to the King-town disguised. Ho, let me by to warn the king of his enemy."

Such audacity could not even be questioned. The guard boats let him through, the warriors in them even cheered him on his way. And Savaran's hand-picked paddlers made record speed upstream.

Time fought against them and nearly beat them when they reached the king-town, for Barstow, having brought news of a hated enemy, was being banqueted by the king.

The eagle-fierce face grinned. Savaran did relish impossible situations, they gave such opportunities for magnificent gestures. Walking round to the kitchens he waylayed a serving man he had marked, and, slipping money into his hand, said:

"As you serve the white *bwana*, whisper to him to beware, since he who led him from the Yanni country is already in Gongoda town. . . ."

He knew that would be enough, Barstow would know it meant Savaran.

No native can resist a spice of intrigue with money attached. The message was delivered to Barstow with the next dish, and Savaran watched the fellow shudder and go green. Then, as he had expected, the fellow's nerve cracked and, heedless of anything but his own safety, he chose a moment when a swirling mob of dancers came between him and the king to slip away . . . An oily and cringing Hazramut met him outside.

"It was I, *bwana*, who sent you news of Zavarani. Your men saw him in the town half an hour ago. Come quickly, I can take you to a good hiding place—for money."

"Yes, get me out of his quick," said the drunk and fearful Barstow. "I'll pay you well."

In his panic he suspected nothing until they reached the waterside and he saw the canoe—with its bows pointing *down* stream. Then he jerked alert, turned on his guide with a screeched: "Who in the devil's name are you?"

"Who else but Savaran?" grinned the lean man and flung him into the canoe.

They travelled down stream all night in safety, for the Gongoda prefers to leave the darkness to devils. Barstow lay under the awning amidships, sullen and unspeaking. It was only when dawn brought a sudden tension and a reaching for and a placing handy of weapons, that he turned and looked ahead to where war canoes dotted the bosom of the river.

"The border?" he asked of Savaran.

"In fifteen minutes we'll be through—and safe," said the lean man. "The Gongoda dare not follow us into Riad waters."

"Will they let you by?"

"With cheers. I'm the gallant Hazramut who carried news of that terror of empires, Savaran, to

● The lean adventurer's quick shot foot landed Barstow windless in the bottom of the canoe.

ILLUSTRATED BY

A. C. MICHAEL

their king. They won't have had time to have learnt the truth about me."

"And when we're through, what then?"

"Straight on to your wife."

"But where is she?"

"At McQuala, on the Keef Coast," said Savaran, and Barstow jerked abruptly to a sitting position.

"McQuala! My God!" he gulped, and then: "Why McQuala—why not the Malaria Colony?"

"It seemed to us the more likely place."

"*Us*!" the man said quickly. "You mean my wife. It was *she* who fixed on McQuala?"

"Does it matter? She's there waiting for you now."

"It matters; by God it matters. Did she arrange it—did she?"

"Yes," shrugged Savaran. "Sensibly she thought——"

He stopped because Rod Barstow had thrown back his head in a long yelping laugh. Savaran cursed him. The Gongoda war canoes were very close.

"Stop that, you fool," he snarled. "It's death for both of us."

"Death!" shouted Barstow and he laughed again. Then he sprang to his feet and screamed in Swahili: "Savaran is here! Savaran is the Hazramut in this canoe! Up Gongoda and slay Savaran."

The lean adventurer's quick-shot foot landed Barstow windless in the bottom of the canoe, but the damage had been done. With a roar of war cries and a flash of paddles the Gongoda canoes came at them.

Savaran's eagle glance flamed as he shouted his own paddlers to furious effort. His pistol swept up and spoke, and the steersman of the nearest canoe fell. The craft yawed and they were by. It spoke again twice and again helmsmen among four canoes hurling forward in a bunch dead, so that the four craft crashed together and dropped astern in inextricable confusion.

Arrows and hammered slugs from trade rifles came screaming over. A paddler fell forward with a shaft through his heart, Savaran tossed the corpse overboard and kicked another man to the paddle. A slug took the lean adventurer himself in the shoulder with the blow of a club, flinging him on his face. Barstow making signs of surrender leapt for the steering sweep, but Savaran was up, had smashed the traitor into the bottom of the canoe, and was in command again in a flash.

A canoe swerved to lay alongside. Savaran also swerved, lunging a grinding, glancing blow along the side of the other and sinking her before her crew could leap. A minute later a canoe did come into them, Savaran having only time to swing his own boat so that she touched bow on instead of broadside—at once hand to hand fighting raged.

It was nearly all Savaran. His tall, spidery figure had leapt into it like a demon. He had snatched a long Riad sword from one of the paddlers and with this he fought like a man inspired. Neither shield nor spear parry seemed able to check the vicious swing and hack of that terrible blade. Like a berserker the bizarre fighter carved his way through the warriors who had gained his canoe, until those who had not died leapt into the river to save themselves from a living demon. With one foot on the nose of the enemy canoe he drove its men stumbling back. Then he roared: "Paddle! Paddle!" and heaved downwards with his foot. The nose of the enemy went under and sank as his own craft rushed clear.

Then Savaran, half fainting, dropped beside Barstow.

"We're through," he shouted. "We've won!"

"No!" Barstow cried with a thin cackle of laughter. "She's won . . . my wife has won . . . *I'm a dead man*!"

Savaran steadied his reeling wits and looked at the man, saw the wound a shovel-headed spear had made in his chest—Barstow was, indeed, a dying man.

"She's won," Barstow croaked again. "Clever Judith—you'll be able to tell her I *am* definitely dead."

Savaran dizzy with pain, mad with rage, cursed him.

"You mean-gutted dog! If you'd only played straight I'd have had you alive and safe with her in two weeks."

"How she would have hated *that*," jeered the dying man.

"You fool! Can't you even yet realise the wonder of a woman like your wife. . . .?"

"I am!" Barstow scoffed. "For the first time. I never could make head or tail of Judith before, but now I do. She's as clever as a snake. What other woman could have taken so much pains to make certain of my death?"

"She'd hardly have picked on the one man in all Africa who could save you if she wanted that," scoffed Savaran.

"She sent the man who had sworn to kill me," said Barstow.

"How was she to know I had sworn it?" the fierce man asked, narrow-eyed. "Or did she?"

"Who knows what she knows or what goes on behind that smooth, sphinx face of hers," shrugged Barstow, and Savaran scowled at this echo of his own first impression. "But she didn't tell you my name was Barstow . . . and that's queer."

Savaran glared at that. That was queer—if Judith Marrion had told him he would never have gone, and she'd never have learnt whether her husband was alive or dead. That is if she had known—but even Barstow was not certain she knew his name. . . . And even if she had, for what end would she deceive: in the hope of his shooting Barstow? Unthinkable! He could see her now—calm, sweet, gentle, negative . . . suspicion of such a creature was absurd.

"It's your rat's mind working," he snarled. "Vicious yourself, you can only think evil of others. The devotion of that noble woman is wasted on you. You can't see that it is her very womanliness that made her risk all to save you and bring you back to her side. . . ."

"In—McQuala," Barstow gasped. "Darn—queer—idea of safety—making you bring me to—McQuala."

"What's wrong with McQuala?" demanded Savaran.

"I'm—I'm—wanted for murder in McQuala," panted the man. "If you—all else—failed her—I was bound—to be hanged in McQuala!"

Savaran's mouth dropped open. He stared in amazement. Barstow's head was sagging sideways, his breath dying. In a sudden fury Savaran gripped his shoulders, cried:

"But, does she know that? Does she know McQuala means hanging for you?"

"Know——" panted the dying man. "Know—Who knows what Judith knows? Ask of the—Sphinx yourself—she—she *may* tell——"

Savaran shook him again. It was no good. He was dead.

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Savaran was a prey to fierce doubt until he sat with Judith Marrion at the secluded end of her hotel verandah in McQuala, telling all that had happened. Watching her he regained confidence in his knowledge of woman nature.

Impossible to credit even a thought of violence to so typical a suburban wife. She was so still, so sweet, so entirely negative. She was too emotionless even to feel anything save what she considered her "duty to her husband."

She listened to his story of peril and death with the same baffling blankness with which a commutor's wife hears of her husband's adventures in a subway breakdown. Only at the end did she touch her eyes with her handkerchief and say:

"Terrible . . . terrible . . . so close to the end, too. . . ."

"Don't grieve too much," said Savaran. "You did all you could—and I too. . . . And perhaps it was for the best. Barstow was a broken man. His life, had he lived, would have been a misery."

"Yes," she said, holding out her hand. "It ends . . . perhaps for the best. I can't thank you enough, Mr. Savaran."

He took her hand, but he was looking at her queerly. He realised that he had called her husband Barstow and not Marrion, and that she had shown no surprise. His keen eyes frowning, he said:

"Did you know that your husband's name was Barstow?"

She looked at him with her smooth, reticent glance and not even he, Savaran, could read whether surprise, fear, cunning, knowledge or sublime innocence was behind it.

And then, just as she was about to speak, and he waited breathless on the brink of knowing her secret, a step sounded on the verandah behind him. She took her hand very gently from his, moved softly past him and with a murmured: "Harry! Harry, my dear!" sank into the arms of a man who had come out of the hotel.

Savaran stood blinking. He recognised the man. He had been pointed out that morning as an American millionaire travelling apparently for his health.

And Judith Marrion had taken refuge as by right in his arms.

What in the name of all riddles did that mean?

Was she the highly virtuous woman she seemed, determined to clear up the mystery of her husband's life or death even by heroic means before consenting to marry "Harry"? Or was Barstow right? Was her choice of the man who had sworn to kill her husband *and* McQuala deliberate? That is, had she done all she could to make sure of her husband's death so that she could marry "Harry"?

Was she Messalina at heart—or mere middle-class morality?

Savaran watched as, very gently and chastely, she allowed Harry to lead her into the hotel. He felt as baffled by her as even ordinary men had been baffled by Mona Lisa, their wives and the Sphinx. Like Barstow he felt that no man ever would know what passed in the mind of Judith Marrion—no not even Harry.

by VINCENT BROME

Adventures

● These explorers searching in the roof of a cavern, look as though they are climbing a giant cake, covered with icing.

WRIGGLING through the dwarfed entrance in the side of the bank, we left the radiant loveliness of that summer morning for the dank darkness of the caves. We carried electric torches, surveyors' lines, and sticks. Feet and bodies were well protected against the damp, although we knew it was impossible to remain dry for long.

At the point where we left familiar passages for unexplored regions, we began laying our surveyors' lines. Deeper and deeper we penetrated into the heart of the hill, braving water curtains, silt deposits, and a dozen slimy deaths.

After what seemed hours of heavy going, dishevelled and mud-bespattered, we emerged into a magnificent cavern, soaring above us with all the solemn splendour of a great cathedral. And simultaneously I discovered that the surveyors' line had broken. In our eagerness to press forward we had been dragging the broken line, instead of paying it out.

Ignoring the beauty of that wonderful cave, serried and divided by lovely stalactites, we began retracing our steps. I found one broken end in a smooth, dark chamber scarcely two hundred yards back. Immediately we pressed on in search of the other. We never found it.

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Not daring to venture far from that smooth chamber where the first end lay, for fear of again losing ourselves, we finally returned, after a dozen fruitless excursions, to hold conference. Water dripped noisily in the silent blackness, sending tiny echoes reverberating back and back into the honeycomb of passages. Life seemed out of place in the heavy death of that atmosphere. The very silence made our conversation uneasy . . . voices echoed.

Suddenly the real horror of our position came on me . . . lost without food or water in this dismaying labyrinth of everlasting darkness. Doomed to hunt for a way of escape until time and hunger, and this overpowering silence, drove us crazy . . . madness creeping slowly on deep in the forgotten places of the earth . . .

I stirred to action.

Half an hour later I found footprints clearly marked in a small silt deposit. Our own footprints. A hundred yards along that same passage was another set.

After an eternity of ploughing through silt and racing against fast-fading torches, we finally wriggled through a narrow mouth into the open once more. By that time we were in a sorry state . . . But that same week we set out on another trip of exploration among the Cheddar Caves.

Hidden away hundreds of feet below the surface lies some of the most beautiful scenery this island can produce. Shut off completely from sun and rain, vast cathedral chambers spread their solemn beauty in everlasting darkness. Mile upon mile of passages open into great caves full of whispering of secret waters. And only a very small part of these subterranean beauties has yet been explored.

Apart from the definitely dangerous districts open to underground exploration, there are others where, although danger is by no means absent, it is not great. For instance, around the celebrated Peak Cavern, which extends back into the hillside for over two thousand feet, there is plenty of scope. The recent discovery of the Treak Cavern in this district has inspired hundreds of ramblers to start fresh voyages of exploration.

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Caves beneath the Castleton Hills, in Derbyshire, are unusually interesting. They are reputed to be at least a hundred thousand years old, yet it is scarcely sixty years since they were discovered. A horse feeding quietly on one of the slopes suddenly vanished from sight in a quite miraculous fashion. It was as though a solid, living piece of horse-flesh, one minute grazing quietly, had, the next, melted into air. Investigation showed that the horse had disappeared down a seventy-foot chasm which remained hidden to the casual eye because of the formation of the ground at this point. Now, a whole wealth of underground caves and passages have been traced from that chasm.

Approach to some of the larger caves is a quite exciting process. At certain points this maze of passages narrows down to mere burrows, through which one has to scramble on all fours. Such scrambling can be very trying, but the caverns, once reached, fully compensate for all the trouble you have taken. One, in particular, has a striking representation of an organ, built entirely by natural processes. Another reproduces in detail all the solemn splendour of a great church.

Still more remarkable is the vast cavern, four hundred feet high, approached by ferryboat, through a subterranean stream. At the foot of this opens the "Bottomless Pit," where the water on which your boat rests rushes to some mysterious doom. It is a strange experience to watch those black waters plunging over into space, as though they must flow on for miles and miles, into the bowels of the earth.

Apart from the well-known caves of Cheddar, there are at least three miles of unexplored passages. A short while ago Mr. Gill, a well-known "pot-holer," set out to investigate one of these passages, which seemed to promise well. A thick-set man of middle age, with a square clean-shaven jaw, Mr. Gill when prepared for his trip resembled Edward Arnold in *Diamond Jim*. He wore the oldest clothes, with heavy boots and a hat thickly padded.

Penetrating some distance under ground, he came upon one of those treacherous silt deposits that cause so much trouble to cave explorers. He carried with him a special stick for the purpose of testing the depths of silt layers, since some are quite capable of sucking men down to most unpleasant deaths.

This one, however, proved to be comparatively shallow, and he ploughed his way across. A few yards more of rough going, and he came upon a deep, silent lake. Sheer walls enclosed it on all sides, and there was no way round. The black, oily waters threw back a steady reflection from his acetylene lamp, and by its light he could just make out a second passage on the opposite side. He tried every possible means short of swimming to get across that lake, but finally baffled had to turn back.

Later, he returned again with a duck punt. In the utter silence of that deep chamber, where even the water made no sound, he lowered his punt into the lake. By the time he had reached the other side his acetylene lamp was weakening. Scrambling out, he carefully made his way into the passage.

Five minutes later he was still moving slowly forward, deeper and deeper into the bowels of the earth. The passage began to widen. As he stepped cautiously into a second chamber his lamp flared, spluttered, and went out. Gill began to strike matches, using a whole bunch at a time, in the form of a torch. And suddenly he caught sight of an astonishing formation.

It was like a great curtain of stone, rippled in regular folds, with varying but perfectly symmetrical curves, tapering gently away to a point. Never before had Gill seen anything to equal this magnificent curtain drooped with lovely grace from the ceiling of the cavern. Here, surely, was something unique in cave formations.

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At this point Gill's matches gave out. Beginning to grope his way back, he was brought up with an ugly jerk. But for the padding of rags Gill always carried in his hat, this vicious contact with an unseen stalactite might have dropped him senseless to the floor. As it was, he went forward in the black silence still more cautiously.

Stumbling over a stone sent endless echoes wandering back and back in eerie recession. Gill stopped to listen. At last the echoes ceased. Then silence, deathly and still more intense, settled again on everything. One expected, any moment, to hear the mystic whisperings of some ghostly race of Morlocks merging from the solid dark.

Gill put out a hand. It touched a smooth,

● It needs courage to sail across the inky black waters of a subterranean lake that seems to have no bottom and no shores; (right) how the world looks to the explorers returning from Underland.

in Underland

rounded stalactite, and using that as a starting point he moved on again, pushing his hands against the pressing darkness . . .

There is something peculiarly unnerving about the secret places of the earth, heavy with their depth, when you are alone, in darkness, and Gill was quite relieved when he had reached, and safely negotiated the lake, once more.

That day's exploration more than satisfied him. He felt sure he had discovered something quite new among British caves. Later investigation proved him right.

When a second attempt was made on the cave they improvised a diving suit and oxygen apparatus, to allow them to walk across the bottom of the lake. It must have needed iron nerves to negotiate those malevolent waters, three hundred feet beneath the earth's surface, but they went through with it quite successfully.

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Now, that huge natural curtain in the second cave has been cleaned, and revealed itself in a variety of the most beautifully blended colours, ranging from red and green to blue and purple. Experts from all over the world have acknowledged that nowhere else is there anything quite like it. During the next few years it is hoped to blast a tunnel through the rock and open the cave to the public.

After somewhat similar adventures, on another occasion Mr. Gill discovered a strange river flowing hundreds of feet beneath the surface in the same district. Running swiftly, these fresh, cool waters gushed beneath a deep cleft in the rocks, ran their course within sight for some distance, and then disappeared into a vast chasm.

Seven pound weights attached to ropes were dropped into this chasm. The power of the water swept them away. But there was no sound to indicate that they had fallen into any lower body of water. Heavier weights were tried and disappeared. Even a wire rope was not proof against the tremendous rush of water. Where does this mysterious river with such astonishing power eventually flow? What strange water-courses and caves honeycomb those lower depths near the heart of the earth?

The beauty of some of the lesser-known caves scattered throughout the country is really remarkable. There are chambers buried hundreds of feet below the earth, with the spaciousness of cathedrals, perfectly dry and well-ventilated. Rocky floors are broken and divided by slender pillars rising in delightful formations. Vast domes stained with lovely colours soar in perfect symmetry. Few creations of man can equal these underground temples, the final expression of thousands of years' gradual building.

When you look at those graceful pillars and realise that each inch of them took four thousand years to develop, the mind reels before the eternity of time the final structure represents.

The sport of pot-holing has a gradually growing public. These pot-holes are spacious caves deep in the earth, connected to the outer world by narrow, perpendicular shafts. Expert pot-holers use rope ladders and various other tackle to enter a pot-hole, since some of them are over three hundred feet below the surface.

Perhaps the most favourite haunt of the pot-holer is the Craven district of the West Riding. The limestone chambers here are extremely beautiful. Moreover, many of the passages radiating from the different pots are quite unexplored. Unless you are an experienced pot-holer it is always advisable to take a guide, or at least to have the company of a local man. Dismaying experiences have befallen several over-bold spirits who ventured into different pots without guides.

Gaping Ghyll, for instance, has a veritable catacomb of passages and chambers radiating from it, sufficient to accommodate thousands of people. To find yourself lost among them may cost you dearly for this daring.

A short while ago two experienced men were exploring the unknown regions of the Cheddar Caves, equipped with compass and all necessary accoutrements. One of the men was known in the district as the human compass, because of his amazing sense of direction. For some time they pushed steadily forward along passages which they thought penetrated deeper and deeper into the hillside.

Then, suddenly, they heard a queer thudding sound. It continued with dull persistence, seeming to come from behind the wall of the passage. They stood quite still, listening. The thudding ceased. Puzzled, they moved forward again. A few yards and the thudding started once more. In the heavy silence it produced a most uncanny effect.

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It was some little time before they realised what had happened. Instead of penetrating deeper and deeper into the earth, the twisting passages and burrows had been leading them back to the surface again. The knocking they had heard so plainly came from mechanical drills and hammers engaged on construction work outside the caves.

It was in this same district that a man spent two nights and two days completely lost in the honeycomb of caves and passages. When, eventually, he was rescued by local guides, he had nearly lost his reason.

Great Ness, in Shropshire, has a remarkable cave set high in a seventy-foot cliff. Approached by a crude flight of steps, it was put to good purpose by Humphrey Kynaston, the famous outlaw. He taught his horse to answer his whistle whenever danger threatened, by climbing those steps to a small rock stable.

Yet another of Britain's underground beauties centres around the Wookey Hole in Somerset. The hyena's den here was once the scene of terrible orgies. Here, too, quarrymen recently stumbled upon a quite unsuspected chamber sheltering the remains of a derotherium. It proved to be of great value since only one other skeleton of this kind has ever been discovered in Europe.

The majority of our underground caverns were, at one time or another, inhabited. In the Cheddar Caves human remains have been found which date back ten thousand years.

It is difficult to imagine civilised people of twentieth-century Britain living in caves to-day, but there are several families of pseudo-Morlocks. Some twelve miles south-west of Birmingham, for instance, there is a long ridge of sandstone called Kinver Edge, where caves have been converted into human habitations.

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Each home is divided into bedroom, living-room, and kitchen. They are quite spacious, have admirable ventilation, and drainage which satisfies the modern inspector. Developing from one crude house the rock front has become a whole row of comfortable homes.

Until a few years ago, another family lived quite happily in a chalk tunnel some twenty feet high and ten feet wide at Gravesend. Mr. and Mrs. Fones declared that this cave was dry and healthy, and at least as good as the two rooms they had previously rented.

Coastguards discovered quite by chance yet another of these cave homes in Devonshire recently. Catching sight of a gleam of light which magically appeared and vanished in the sheer face of the cliff, they went to investigate.

A narrow path brought them to a rope hanging some two hundred feet above the sea. Using this as it was obviously intended to be used, they reached a cave mouth. Inside a rough fireplace had been constructed, a bed arranged, and cooking utensils stored. But no one was there. Inquiries threw no further light on the cave dweller.

To the End of the ROAD

A Complete Story

EVERYONE who knew him well called him John. Others said: "You know that little man who repairs bags at Tilden and Lathrope's."

His hands had been scarred by the work he did, and his back bent by it. He had a way of looking over his glasses at those who carried luggage up the back stairs of the smart shop to the repair department, and some customers did this instead of sending ailing bags up by a clerk.

"Good morning, John, can you do anything with this old wreck?"

"Good morning, Mr. Williams. Why, yes, yes, indeed! I can fix her!" with a look over his glasses and his smile; a smile you didn't forget. Then he would stroke the bag. "Yes, I can fix her like new. Where'd you take her, Mr. Williams?"

He would listen spellbound to any tale of any trip. Venice: "Did you feed the doves in that square before St. Mark's?" London, and he would speak in a hush of Trafalgar Square and the lions and the Houses of Parliament; he "supposed they would look pretty fine lit by night." It was hard to break away from him when he got started, for the wanderlust was in him—he who had never missed a day at work for forty years.

"Mean to go myself," he always said at some point during the talk. "Goin' to go. Ain't nothin' goin' to hold me back when I get started. Just ain't started yet. What with one thing or another, just been held back. But I'm goin' to go."

The things which had held him back were those petty anchors that accumulate in the day-after-day struggle to make ends meet that is called life. First there was the aunt who had reared him; she had had a stroke and had needed care and got it. That was twenty years before. Then there was his sister's boy, left orphaned. "A real good boy," John always explained; and John had fed, clothed and educated him.

He was utterly generous and he never regretted anything he had given anyone else. Indeed, he was so generous he did not know he had given, but sums of money had for him a curious form of exchange.

The junior clerks who were too young to know much of hunger used to tease him about that world tour of his.

"When are you going to start, John?"

"Pretty soon; it ain't a-goin' to be long now."

The clerk would smile. "Where you going first, John?"

"Take off at noon; wanta see the harbour. Some boats sail now at midnight. Next time I go I'll sail at midnight, but this first time, on account of the harbour, goin' to sail at noon. London's first on my itinery. Goin' to spend a month there. I got a good deal to do in London, and I'm goin' to travel around some. Goin' to Edinburgh and in the country round London—Cambridge, Oxford, Hampton Court. Looks like I'd have to hustle a little to git it all in. But I ain't agoin' to miss nothin' even if I have to stay up all night to see it. Then Paris after London, and . . ."

He'd talk all day of his trip, if you didn't break away; and the young clerks laughed because, in his workroom that was made dim by dust on window panes, he would talk tenderly to the bags on which he worked.

"Been to London, ain't you? Well, well. Mebbe you was in one of them fogs." And he'd smile, pause in his work to stroke the bag.

Sometimes labels actually made his old body tremble. Mr. Tilden, of the firm (Lathrope, long gone), was accustomed to John's appearance at his office door. Without pause in his work he always said a gentle "Go ahead, John," and John would move across the room to find the atlas, and to hunt on the map a place where a label had been attached to a bag he had stroked.

Mr. Tilden would smile, hearing John's murmur: "Well, that's a new one. Have to read her up. Might be somethin' I shouldn't miss."

Then he would often raise his head to look after the old, stooped man, on whose lips, so much of the time, was the smile of an eager child.

John was popular beyond the shop, too. The neighbours of the street whereon he lived all knew him and his hope.

The children of the street loved him, too. He helped them all with "jogerphy." "Come on Annabel, and I'll hear yer lesson."

Every evening, before he knelt stiffly to say his prayers, he looked into the two lowest drawers of his bureau, which were crammed with descriptive folders of every land and port.

He had his favourites—with coloured pictures—and Sunday morning was dedicated to a perusal of these. He looked through them as he intended to journey through them—England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy.

At night after he had said his prayers he always opened a cupboard to get out his bag. It was a very fine bag—the last of a continued story that had been made by exchanges during the years.

"Mr. Tilden, I'm meanin' to exchange my bag; the one I got last year. I seen one I like better fer travellin' needs."

"Go ahead, John; fix it up with Jennings."

"Yes, sir. And thank yuh."

"Not at all, John."

They let him have any bag in the shop for almost nothing, for the bag always came back in a year or so, good as new, when John found a new one that suited his travelling needs better.

He was a great stickler for good luggage, knowing a bag and its fine points as he did and what the smart traveller should carry. It really troubled him to have untutored women buy men's bags as some did. A little bride went off with a wrong size suitcase and he worried deeply. "Somebody had ought to have told her, Mr. Tilden. That wasn't no lady's bag. Folks who know—and a good many do, I'm happy to say—they'll think that looks funny."

"Well, she didn't know and she wanted it, John. Jim tried to sell her the proper bag, but she didn't want it."

They always called him down into the rear of the shop when new shipments of luggage came in. He was entranced by some changes and incensed by others. The new, light airplane luggage delighted him, and no one was surprised when he bought a bag lightly designed to travel by air.

"Hadn't meant to go by 'plane, but I suppose I'll have to go 'long with that bag. Gotta have one, Mr. Tilden."

"Yes," Mr. Tilden agreed, "you should have one."

"Mr. Tilden, I been thinkin' I oughta have slip covers fer my luggage." His rare frown was brought out by perturbed consideration.

"Good-morning, Mr. Williams. Why, yes, yes, indeed! I can fix her like new."

by Katherine Haviland-Taylor

"I believe you should, John."

"It come to me in the night that I should."

"Wakeful?" Mr. Tilden asked, and he looked anxiously at this human part of his business days. The old fellow hadn't looked quite himself for some time. His skin, yellowing, seemed a reflection of some of the pigskin bags he repaired; and the whites of his eyes were, some days, yellow, too. He complained a little; that he felt kind of sickish sometimes to his stomach and that things didn't taste good.

"I don't sleep so good mebbe as I used to," John admitted.

"Doctor? Maybe you'd better see one, John."

John shook his head. "My trip'll fix me," he stated with a certainty he did not feel, "an' I'm pretty near ready to go."

John mounted the twisting stairs that led to his quarters, murmuring of the problem that troubled him. He had a pain in his middle that plagued him, and he wasn't quite certain that he shouldn't see a doctor, and yet one visit to a doctor would deduct a day from his trip. If you wanted to get anywhere, he had realised early, you had to think and plan and kinda scheme.

"Ain't agoin' to see one," he said sternly, as he moved toward his bench.

A bag stood there waiting for new corners. He touched it with fingers that lingered and his face softened; and then, because the pain was so bad that he couldn't keep on his feet, he settled by the bag and closed his eyes, waiting for the pain to go. . . . He could feel it and the wide, dear world he so loved, through the pain. . . . "Just give me my trip, God, if you please," he whispered unsteadily. When it got to going, the pain, it was bad.

After a while the pain dwindled and he found he could see again. He rose, tremulous from that which he endured and stiffened from it. He was panting and sweat was beaded on his lined brow, but in a few moments he forgot, with skilful fingers busy at his work.

"Been to London, ain't you? Well, well, goin' myself one of these days. Want to see that grape vine 'lizabeth planted. Seems awful funny to me, so many folks namin' their young 'lizabeth and there weren't one thing wicked she didn't do, 'cording to what I read in them books; and Victoria such a nice lady and they hardly never name no kids fer her. Been to Belgium, too, ain't you? Goin' myself. Want to hear them chimes. Holland—windmills—and the little girls in them caps. . . ."

He had a nice descriptive folder about Holland. He had read every word in every travel folder he possessed a hundred times.

A clerk came running up the stairs with an overnight bag; a very expensive, beautifully fitted bag. He smiled, for old John would enjoy it so much.

"Here's one for you," he sang out. "Take a look."

The old man looked. "Lovely," he said. "Lovely."

Then—the pain again, and he had to take the young clerk's arm. "Just don't feel good," he whispered.

The young clerk put an arm around him. "Why, John," he said and his eyes stung. The place wouldn't be the same without old John. "Sit down, John," he said urgently.

John shook his head. "I need a trip," he whispered as he moistened dry lips, "and I'm goin' to take one—soon."

That night he sought Mr. Tilden before leaving.

"Mr. Tilden," he said, worry in his voice, "I got to tell yuh somethin'. I loafed on my job a good hour to-day and I want Jennings to deduct that from my pay."

Mr. Tilden turned in his desk chair.

"Sit down, John," he ordered. The old man sank to the chair near the desk gratefully. The pain was goin' it again.

"You never have to worry about loss of working time here," said Mr. Tilden. "You've given us much too much all these years. We know it. You see, John, you've given us perpetual spring."

"I dunno as I follow you, Mr. Tilden.'

"Well, I guess it wasn't very clear. But our young clerks, John, they aren't hoping for anything ahead; and you always are, and spring does that. Why, I can look back and see you, a young man, repairing harness and talking to me about a trip."

John nodded, smiled and kept on nodding, for the connection between will and flesh was weakening.

"I had my trip alla my life, Mr. Tilden, to think about. I've been a fortunate man."

"You have, John."

"And here, workin' fer yuh, and I love yuh like I would a brother, and with the bags that—that belong in all my dreams, Mr. Tilden. It ain't every man's so fortunate."

"You're right, John."

Mr. Tilden wondered, looking at John, whether any tour could be so wonderful as all the dreams he had had. He spoke a little of this thought, saying:

"You've travelled as some of us who have really travelled never have, John—and, after all, that's enough."

Now the old fellow shook his head definitely.

"No, sir!" he said briskly. "I'm goin' to travel real; more than in just my heart and mind. I'm goin' to start at noon. Some boats sail at midnight, but the first time I'm goin' to sail at noon on account of the harbour. I want to see the harbour, Mr. Tilden; and I'm goin' to London. Nine-day boat. Want some time on the boat on account of I've never been on no boat. Land in London, nine days after the start. In London met by the boat train and——"

He'd be late for dinner, Mr. Tilden saw with a circumspect glance at the energetically ticking wall clock, but for some reason he didn't want to cut old John short. Mr. Tilden nodded now and again or put in a word.

"Then, in Holland, I aim to get there fer the tulip time—a sight unsurpassed, it reads in one of my books. I'll. . . ."

John was young, talking of where he would go, and there, Mr. Tilden thought, was the secret of life. A line from a Millay poem came to him:

"I came upon no wine so wonderful as thirst."

"And when I start, Mr. Tilden, I bet I bust out and cry. Some days, Mr. Tilden, it's been like this—a train whistle, it would make an ache in me. But always I been helped in my waitin', this way. So many can go and does, and that's good to think about and know. Many a night when I've laid wakeful, gnawed by this here pain I get fer goin', I've calmed myself thinkin' of how many people do travel, and after I think 'Why, ain't that nice so many can go?' I get to feelin' better and I go to sleep."

The clock on the wall struck seven.

"It ain't seven?" John asked with an incredulous look at the clock face.

"I guess it is, John."

"Why, it seems no more'n a minute since I settled myself here. And your supper'll be cold. I hadn't oughta let you talk along this way to me, Mr. Tilden. I had oughta cut you short and sent you home to your good lady, who likely will blame me fer your cold supper."

Mr. Tilden rose, smiling.

"We won't worry about that," he said. He studied John. John had come to them a young man when a horse had stood in the big window of the old shop and when deep, big trunks had coloured lithographs pasted inside the bulging lids. A long time ago, and John's body showed this. But his eyes, the light in them, and his smile, were as April under sun.

Mr. Tilden wanted to touch the old man's hand.

"You know life's a journey," he said.

"Yessir, I know it. I didn't say I was goin' first to Westminster, but I am. I'm goin', and I'm goin' to say my thank you in the Poets' Corner before the effigies. I read and read about 'em—them cloisters."

"John cry for those who have no want left for the end of life."

"Yes, sir. And the Temple Church. That must be wonderful."

Mr. Tilden said it was not so wonderful as he, John, was; and John frowned because he did not understand. Then he saw Mr. Tilden's outstretched hand and he took it humbly, saying: "I thank you fer shakin' my hand."

He stood looking down on his right hand.

He had his trip. The pain grew so bad the next Friday morning that Mr. Tilden himself called a doctor, who, after seeing the old man in a long apron of ticking, went down to Mr. Tilden's office.

"Hospital case," he said, "and if I know signs, it's an operating case. Gall bladder. That colour."

"I see," said Mr. Tilden under his breath.

"How old is he?"

"Seventy-two."

"Not so good," said the doctor.

"Does it have to be done?" asked Mr. Tilden.

"He'll die without it. With it he may possibly pull through. He'll have a chance if we operate. I'll take him up for observation—all that—but I'm pretty sure. I know the signs and they're not unique."

"Give him the best room in the place," said Mr. Tilden. He was shaking a little. How to climb those stairs without seeing John at the head of them, hand on a bag, smiling down on it. "I care for him," he said with that betraying boom that shows a voice beyond control.

"I'll do everything I can, Mr. Tilden."

"I know, but—the old fellow's always wanted to travel. I—well, you do all you can, won't you?"

"I will. Always do. My business. No doctor likes to lose a patient. It's not good advertising."

"I know."

John lay in bed in his small room while Mrs. Jenkins packed his bag. He smiled. "I'm goin' on a trip," he said, and that made him laugh. So many years he had waited to carry one of the many bags he had possessed, and now to the hospital. It seemed amusing to him, and he spoke of it as "funny."

Mrs. Jenkins, eyes brimming, neared the bed and she smoothed the sheet under John's chin.

"Comfortable?" she asked.

He nodded.

"I was thinkin'," he said, "I could take them books I have in the drawers of my bureau and look at 'em, gettin' well."

She said she would bring a box for them, and she did, with a little supper that he could not eat.

He was to be made ready for the operation he heard at the hospital, with three days of special diet; and he enjoyed it all. There was his bag, left by his day nurse, where he could see it; and she was gentle with him, who had served humanity enough to judge it and to know it.

"There's your bag, dear, ready to go!" she said brightly. She didn't think he had a chance, and it hurt her. After every case she lost, she cried a little; she couldn't help it.

"I wish they had labels up here," he said. "I have been here."

"Now you wait," she bade him brightly, and she slipped away. When she came back she had the label made from a sheet of hospital letterpaper.

"The Good Shepherd Hospital," he read, and he beamed.

She brought his bag close to the bed and they consulted as to where it should be attached, this label. Then a doctor came in and he added his voice and it was a great moment. John's cheeks were bright and his eyes shone.

"You get the glue," said the doctor—they are given to issuing orders when possible—and the nurse turned to disappear.

Each evening the boys from the shop came to see John, waiting the big day.

"What kind of bags came in?" John would ask, and those of the group who understood would describe them fully, with their labels. The duller spoke only of their need, to say: "We miss you, John."

"Goin' to miss me more after I get through this," he promised, "for I'm going to take my trip."

He realised, lying quietly, that he had found some new roads without motion. He had found the gentleness of women through two nurses who had learned to love him.

He spoke of this to the night nurse, who had listened to his tales of travel and of where he was going.

"I'm kind of in love with you two young ladies," he confessed, "and that's one way for a man to travel, but till now I hadn't known it."

She said a warm "Darling!" and she took his hand to hold it.

"I've had a fine life," he said.

He came out of ether strong but confused. He was on a ship that sailed at noon, and in the hospital corridor clock-hands pointed to twelve, and in the open whistles blew. He saw the harbour and he spoke of it. "Nine days," he said, "and I've started on my trip—my big trip." The day nurse wiped his brow. He was smiling. It was strange, but he found in the air a tang of salt and a cool freshness. His smile widened and he said: "The Poet's Corner. . . . Thank you, God, thank you."

And the last, long journey had begun.

END

"My name is Bray," he said. "I've arrived at an awkward moment."

SHORT SHORT STORY

POOR FISH

by S. L. Bensusan

THE play presented by amateurs in Maychester Town Hall to aid the funds of the local Fire Brigade had attracted the support of all distinguished people in the neighbourhood, as well as the rank and file. It was a test of local patriotism, for the play was written in the vernacular and dealt with poaching. Landed gentry were there, ruined farmers and their families, prosperous tradesmen like Mr. Turpin and Mr. Peace, respectable professional men like Mr. Buffle the Estate Agent (Trudge & Buffle, Established 1834), Mr. Crake the Auctioneer (Tippet, Sludge & Crake), Mr. Dump, Lawyer (Mastiff, Whale & Dump).

Between the first and second acts Mr. Buffle beckoned to Mr. Cartwell, large farmer and owner of both sides of Silver Brook, tributary of the Whitewater. "I just wanted a word about a little bit of business," said Mr. Buffle. "I might not see you again for a few days."

"I can't hardly think of business now," protested the farmer untruthfully, "with me boy an' gel in th' play an' all."

"Delightful," replied Mr. Buffle, rubbing his aged hands, "you must be a proud father. I congratulate you, two very capable young actors, I thought. What was I going to tell you? I remember. I've an enquiry from a client about a little trout fishing."

"Ah," said Mr. Cartwell, instantly interested and alert, "that's a nice drop o' water, ever anybody want to see. Three pools, more'n half a mile, nigh three-quarters by the good rights, both banks and lots o' fish. That's worth twenty pound at least, Mr. Buffle."

"One can but try," said the auctioneer. "I shouldn't wonder. I'll write you to-morrow."

Mr. Cartwell is a man who thrives. Bad times come to Carpenters' Farm and try in vain to establish themselves there, but the best they can achieve is a declaration from Mr. Cartwell that he is nearly ruined and that his wife, son, daughter and staff must strive harder than ever to keep the wolf from the door. They do so, and the wolf retires.

The farmer talked with Mr. Buffle on the telephone about Silver Brook, and Mr. Buffle said that Mr. Bray would be coming down on the mid-day train two days later and would be driven over in the staff car by Miss Sparks, his personal secretary.

On the morning of Mr. Bray's visit Mr. Cartwell had an appointment in Market Waldron, but it did not take him long enough to enable him to wait for his client. Returning, he went at once to the yards, and it was there that Mrs. Cartwell, who has none of the qualities of her husband and children, directed the newcomer, a good looking, well-groomed young man, very elated and excited.

He arrived in unfortunate hour. "Master gone down to Silver Brook," said a grinning stockman. "He's in a rare caddle."

Not knowing what a caddle may be, Mr. Bray proceeded in the direction of the little river, there to encounter drama. Twenty yards away by the water's edge a policeman was holding a tattered lad, slender and slightly built, who was obviously in a state of great distress. Mr. Cartwell, hot and bothered, had left the two, who were facing the other way; he was carrying a large trout in one hand, while he grasped a stick in the other.

"Take him away, Ruffead, and charge him," he cried, turning round. "If I couldn't ha' got you, I'd ha' paid him myself. I don't want to hear anything more. That's the third time I've caught him with a three or four-pounder. Take him away." Then, turning again, Mr. Cartwell espied the stranger, and said abruptly: "Good morning, sir. What's your business?"

"My name is Bray," said the young man, "and I fear I've arrived at an awkward moment."

"Come along," said the farmer, "I ought to have known. I was expecting you. It can't be helped Take him away, Ruffead; I'll put up with it no longer. I don't want to hear any more excuses, I've heard 'em all before."

"Fact is," he continued, mopping his forehead, "there used to be a lot of river poaching here and I put an end to it years ago. But that lad the policeman's just marched off, has beaten me again and again. He'll tickle them, and he'll fish for them with worms, and he'll catch some of the best. I caught him red handed half an hour ago. Look at this fish. I've let him off twice. This time he must go through with it."

"Well, well," said Mr. Bray. "A trout's a great temptation, don't you know, eh what?"

"Just half a minute," said Mr. Cartwell. "As we have it I'll go indoors and ask my wife to cook it for lunch; you must stay and share it. We shall be five, but that won't be too many. You won't often get a fish that size; we don't either. Excuse me a minute." He went to the farmhouse, gave instructions and returned.

Then the two walked the length of the river. Mr. Bray saw the three pools and noted with appreciation the white and pink thorn bushes behind which one might cast, the friendly deserted meadows on either side. He was frankly enthusiastic and offered to take a lease of the fishing for seven years at twenty pounds a year.

Mr. Cartwell's manner stiffened. He made haste to explain that the rent was twenty-five, and that if Mr. Buffle said twenty he was in error. Then he added frankly he didn't want to let on lease, because twelve hundred yards of trout fishing grew into more money year by year, since the demand increases and the supply diminishes.

If Mr. Cartwell was hard, Mr. Bray was persistent, and in the end it was agreed that he should have the fishing for three years at twenty-five and for four at thirty pounds per annum, and should pay all the proper charges of Messrs. Trudge & Buffle.

Mr. Cartwell then led the way back to the house where, in his little office, a provisional contract was drawn up, signatures exchanged and a cheque on account paid over. Then, just before lunch was served, Mr. Cartwell rang up Mr. Buffle; the terms were taken down on his behalf by a clerk, the aged head of the house having left the office. Mr. Bray confirmed them.

An admirable meal followed. A glass of sherry preluded the large trout, which was served with excellent salad, peas and new potatoes. A sweet with cream from the dairy followed, to be succeeded by cheese, farmhouse butter, home-made bread and a cup of good coffee. Cider was served, and a glass of port wine sounded the final note of the hospitality movement. Before the port stage, Bob and Mary Cartwell, the athletic son and pretty daughter, had left the table to return to work, Mrs Cartwell also made excuses.

"We're all workers here, Mr. Bray," said Mr. Cartwell frankly, and there was no mistaking the implication, which added in a way to the flavour of the hospitality.

"Well, I've nothing left to do but to thank you for a first-class lunch," replied Mr. Bray. "Mr. Buffle told me that if it should not be convenient for you to take me into Market Waldron, he would send his staff car in again."

"I can run you up," said the farmer, "and if we start at once we can spend a few minutes with Mr. Buffle. You'll still have five to spare for the afternoon train."

They drove off to Market Waldron. Mr. Buffle, with the fine, detached dignity that is part of his makeup, congratulated the fishing tenant, noted instructions which Mr. Bray signed, and undertook the prompt preparation of the agreement.

Mr. Cartwell took Mr. Bray to Market Waldron station and then drove to the High Street, slowly and thoughtfully, and he pulled up at Mr. Deare's shop. Mr. Deare was sunning his apron in front of the door. "I've got change now, Mr. Cartwell," he said, smiling.

"So have I," said the farmer. "How much was it?"

"Three pounds, ten ounces, at 'two shillin'," said Mr. Deare.

"That's a lot of money," sighed Mr. Cartwell.

"Call it seven an' six," said Mr. Deare firmly. "You never ate a better trout I lay, and I had to telephone to Spillingsgate for it to come down on the early."

"Well, well," agreed Mr. Cartwell, as he paid three half-crowns, "even a poor farmer wants a little luxury now and again."

He moved more slowly along the High Street when he left Market Waldron's leading fishmonger, and stopped outside the Town Hall to look at the play bills which were still intact. He read with pride.

"George Twite (a policeman) ... Mr. Robert Cartwell.

Robin (a tramp) ... Miss Mary Cartwell."

"They done well," remarked Mr. Cartwell to the bill he had scanned. "I'm proud of each of the both of 'em, they're every bit as good as I was, time I was their age. They may wanter go play actin' whiles just as I did, but they don't miss no chances."

Laughter

The "PASSING SHOW" Smile Section

"Aye, zur, the 'arvest ale be a bit stronger this year, zur."

"I'm afraid you're neglecting your work, Harkins; this is the third accident you've had this week."

"Something terrible has happened, Mr. Wilmot. I played poker with Count Spumoni and lost the ship!"

"It's the chef, sir, he's studying magic by mail, sir."

"Don't you think it would have been fairer if we'd sat up with the other competitors on the pier?"

"Baghdad reports visibility three miles, ceiling four hundred feet."

A MAN AND A FROST

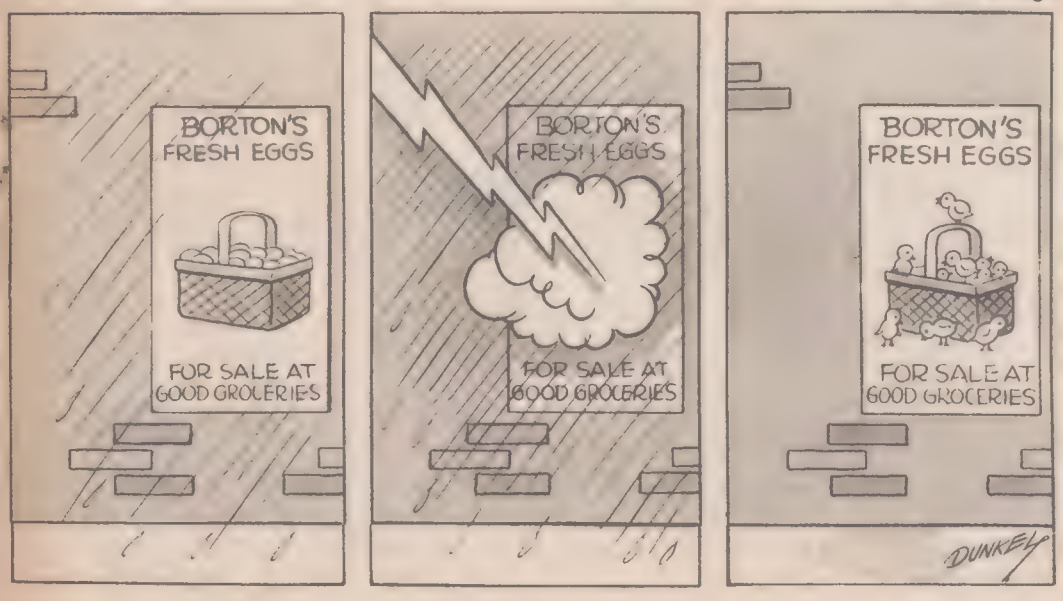
by A. C. BARRETT

"We couldn't get it in the door!"

"Next time I catch you boys playing, you're sacked!"

"Hold 'em till the roof falls in, boys!"

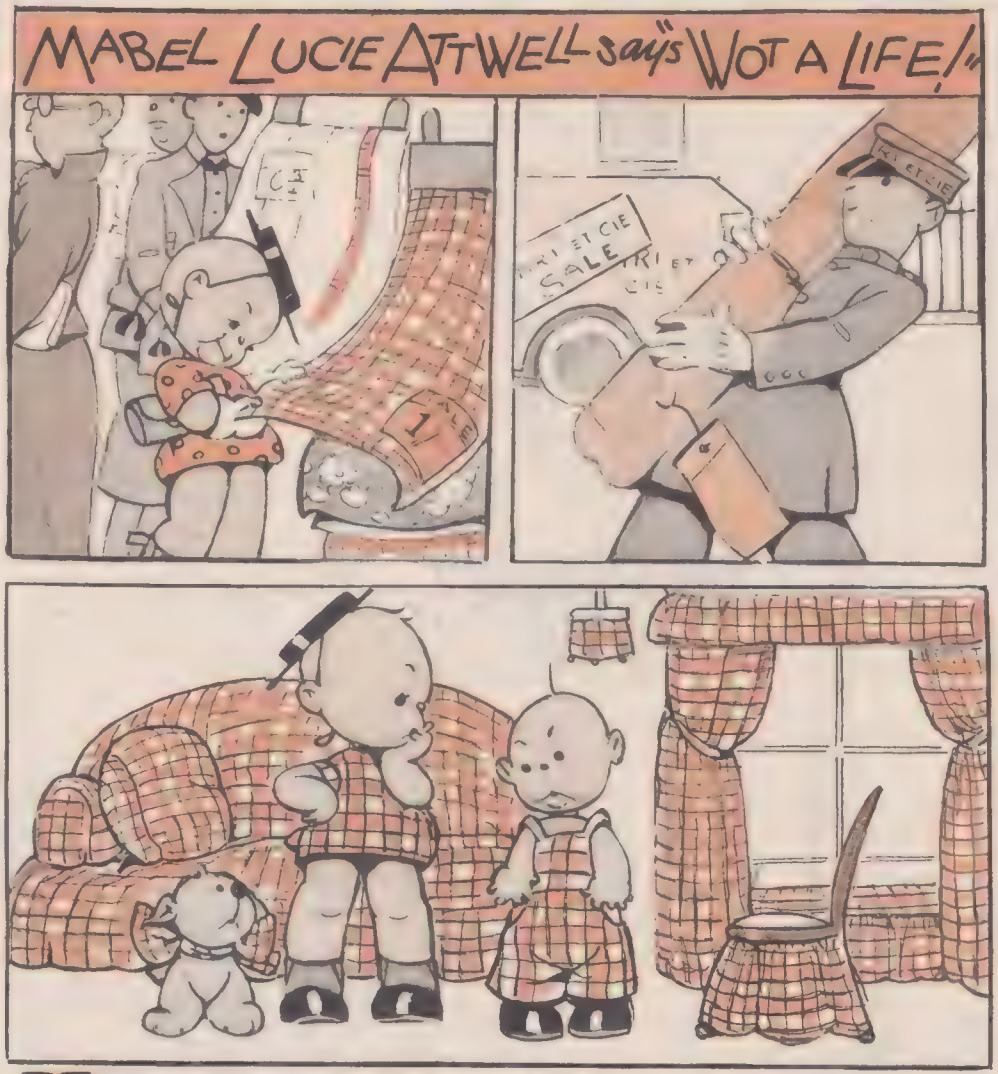
"I bought him when he was quite tiny; the man said he was a Siamese kitten."



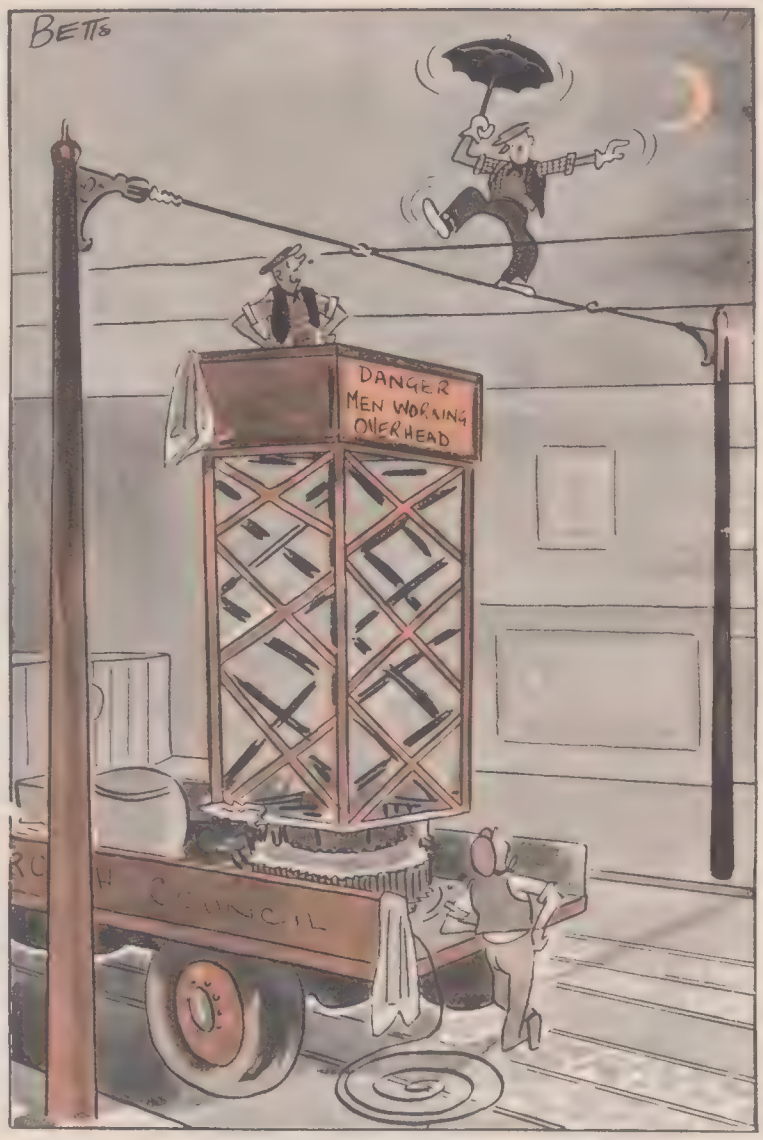
LAUGH WITH THE WORLD

"Why the parrot beside your bed?"
"Because I want to know what I say in my sleep."
—*Lustige Blatter*, Berlin.

"Hands up! And not a movement."
—*Das Illustrierte Blatt*, Frankfurt.



Of course – like the rest – I've been to the sales –
Found such a bargain – I bought it in Cales –
I says "it's real cheap, I must see I've enough
But – I ain't sure I ain't just dashed sick of the stuff!



"Don't fool about, Joe, we'll never get done!"

OLD BILL and BERT — by BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER

Catch! —the Holiday Spirit

by DR. DOUGLAS HAY SCOTT

THERE comes a time each year when every one of us feels mentally and physically tired. It is useless to call on the doctor, asking him to prescribe a tonic or a pick-me-up. The wise doctor, indeed, knowing humanity, will in the majority of cases, diagnose the case and tell the patient frankly that he needs a holiday.

A holiday. What a magic ring there is about the word. It conjures up days of glorious relaxation, of freedom from routine, of release from monotony. But where? And how? And when? These questions must be answered by the individual, and the answers must be satisfactory, otherwise the doctor's prescription will not fulfil its purpose.

One of the most important factors in the success of a holiday is careful planning. Preliminaries are everything; organisation beforehand means the maximum benefit from the days of vacation before us.

There are certain personal equations to be dealt with in studying the science of satisfactory holiday-making. The biologists tell us that the organism reacts on the environment and the environment on the organism, and the most perfect harmony exists when both are sympathetically reconciled the one to the other.

It is futile to conclude that one can glibly decide without preliminary thought and consideration that Margate is the place for Aunt Susan or that the children will derive the most benefit from a camping holiday on Dartmoor. The make-up of each individual must be considered, then the qualities of the proposed resort summed up. If the two are in agreement, then the trunks may be taken out and clothes and equipment bought.

Having reached the decisions that refer to what we might call the basic principles of holiday-making, we find that numerous minor considerations must be made. Remember that no two human beings are alike; one man's recreation may not suit his neighbour. The essential in all restful and recuperative holidays is happiness and contentment. There is nothing so degenerative to the human mind than the realisation that hopes have been dashed to the ground, that things have not turned out as expected. All these and similar so-called insignificant factors of holidaymaking make the holiday, and if it is to be the means of fitting us for hard months ahead, destructive elements must be completely eliminated.

Let us consider the great mass of workers who stew in offices and factories during those terrible "dog days" of July, verily counting the days that must elapse until August rings the bell that sounds freedom of the country and the sea. Most of these men and women are living on their reserves. They have weathered the storms of the variable winter, they have exerted every power of their natural defences to fight the vagaries of spring, and now, despite the lengthening days and the greater amount of sunlight, they are worn out like troops who have been kept too long in the trenches under the continued strain of active hostilities.

The body is answering to all its responsibilities, but at a certain price; that price is mental irritability and drain on the resources of the blood. The cerebral centres are hard pressed and that the sooner the brain-cells have a proper rest, the better for the human being involved.

The blood, too, suffers, although the signs and symptoms may not be quite as evident. This vital fluid, circulating in every part of the body and supplying the tissues with oxygen and finely filtered food, is weakened by the poor appetite, the sluggishness, the broken sleep and the constipation, all of which are so common just before the holidays are due. In the blood there is something far more important than a system of food and gas transport. Those important white blood corpuscles, the leucocytes, are present in a certain concentration and each one may be regarded as a scavenger or policeman or special guard of the tissues, since its function is by certain peculiar properties, to destroy germs and get rid of the effects of their toxins. When the leucocytes, like their neighbours the red cells, or the other organs of the body for that matter, are fatigued and suffering from the prolonged battle against the ever-menacing microbes, they cannot be expected to do their normal work efficiently. This is in summer time a most serious state of affairs.

Hot weather brings increased activity of germs and many diseases such as typhoid fever, food poisoning, summer diarrhoea, and dysentery. They are so virile that a first-class fighting force is needed to defeat them.

What do we need to restore our tired brains to normal power and our war-worn blood-cells to fighting fitness? Let us enumerate the fundamentals simply and briefly. First there is rest, which involves complete muscular relaxation for long periods, increased hours of sleep, absence of anything that will put a tax on the thinking apparatus, and freedom from the jarring note. It is the great essential of recuperation, no matter where you may take your holiday.

Then there is recreation. All rest and no play would certainly make Jill a dull young lady. Some type of interesting game or occupation must be in the programme; something that will lightly hold the mind and stimulate the "happy" centres to activity. Thirdly, the right diet. The ideal gastronomic routine is one that includes plenty of green vegetables and fresh fruits, with brown bread, butter, eggs, milk and fresh fruit drinks.

Having thus categorically listed the essentials of the perfect holiday, we may turn over in our minds one or two of the smaller items in the programme. It pays to be selfish or even greedy so far as obtaining a share of the good things provided by Nature for her creatures at the seaside or among the hills is concerned. The sun is there most of the time; it is a kindly sun, resplendent in its light, in its ultra-violet rays that are so good for the vitamin-activities of the body, in its infra-red emanations that warm the cockles of our heart and save us from the hard work of keeping the body up to its standard heat.

But the sun, like everything else, must be respected. To begin with only the smallest areas of the body should be exposed and then only for brief periods. As time goes on, and the skin becomes protected by pigment (we call it sunburn), more and more liberties may be taken with the sun.

Sea-bathing is a marvellous tonic, but it is definitely bad for a certain class of person. Let those who love the sea, sport in it until the cows come home, but to force sea-bathing on anyone contrary to his inward promptings, is often to inflict not a pleasure but dangerous pain.

There is another aspect to perfect holiday enjoyment, and it refers once more to individual freedom. A holiday *en famille* is often a necessity, and provided it is governed by reasonable direction, it ought to be an unqualified success. One pathetic and self-sacrificing figure stands out, however, from the group of holiday-makers hurrying with their bags and tennis rackets, their spades and pails, their bowls and their blazers to the railway station. It is the mother of the family. Does she, poor soul, get all she deserves out of that precious fortnight?

Too often the unimaginative male, primed with his guide books and his holiday pamphlets, is forgetful of the quiet and unobtrusive little lady who has toiled over the oven for eleven months, who has trailed round the market with the shopping basket, who has wearily made the beds and done the washing and in a hundred and one ways kept the home fires burning while the rest were at their daily jobs. Is it fair to her, do you think, that she should be almost literally jerked out of the frying pan into the fire and made to carry on her job as caterer, general director, and materfamilias of the seaside villa that father has thought would be a "fine idea" this year?

It is time a plea was put up for the tried and trusted but tired and disgusted mothers of England, who need to have their brains and blood refreshed quite as much as the industrial worker or the city clerk.

Now for the last word, which may be said to the music of the band, to the songs of the pierrots, to the soothing splash of the waves, to the cry of the curlew wheeling about the Scottish loch, to the lapping of the Bavarian lake, or to the rhythmic thump-thump of the train bearing good people away to the West or North. The parting thought must be that instinct in almost every case is right. No matter how you may be situated, provided you do not encroach on the freedom of others, by all means obey instinct and do what you want to do on holiday. Having run riot with ordinary routine, you will return to the discipline of the daily round with a welcome and a smile.

"No matter how you may be situated, obey instinct and do what you want to on holiday."

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D.D.D. BRAND PRESCRIPTION

Continuing The Legacy Murders *by* Francis Beeding

PANIC *among the*

READ THIS FIRST

Valerie Beauchamp, best-seller novelist, is murdered four days after her discovery that she had been hoaxed by fellow members of a literary society, the Esoterics, into believing that one of her readers had fallen in love with her. Even though she was demented on hearing that the Esoterics read her passionated love letters, her will shows she has left £200 to each of them—Councillor Joshua Stanton, Edward Calcott, who was the bogus lover, Frederick Reeves, Adelaide Tring, Naomi Garnett, and Cyril Sidebotham—and, if any of them dies, his income is to be shared by the others. The spotlight of the story moves to Marseilles, where a strange little man is furtively buying arsenic and a revolver; then Adelaide Tring is poisoned. Lavinia Brown, companion to the murdered novelist, goes to Scotland Yard to say she has noticed footprints leading from the greenhouse where Dr. Reeves keeps his drugs to Adelaide Tring's home. She accuses the doctor's son, Fred, a beneficiary under the will, of being the murderer, and adds, "They will all die." And then the mystery becomes even more involved because Fred is found shot dead in his car. Now read on.

INSPECTOR MARTIN pressed the bell of No. 255 High Street, Highwood, a second time. It shrilled high and clear and at the same moment he became aware of voices audible through the window of the room on his left.

"Now, Mary, that isn't the way to talk to your mistress."

"I speak as I'm spoken *to*," a Cockney voice protested. "When a person is told she is the worse for liquor, a person has the right to re-hact. I was sufferin' cruel with neuralgia—if you want to know."

"Nonsense, Mary. The symptoms of neuralgia and intoxication are not the same. But we will say no more about it. You are an excellent cook. I have no fault to find with your work and I have decided to give you another chance."

"Neuralgia," insisted the delinquent. "And I'm not asking favours. I stops 'ere—if I stop—because it's my right and, when I 'as an attack of neuralgia, I 'as my remedy—as you might take it yourself. The three-star cure—as my poor old father used to say."

"Very well, Mary. We will not discuss it further. Go and answer the bell. I have heard it twice already and, if it's the butcher, tell him we don't want anything to-day."

Heavy footsteps sounded in the hall. The front door opened and Martin found himself confronting a large domestic with flaming red hair and a purple face.

"I wish to see Mr. Calcott," said Martin.

Mary shook her head.

"It ain't possible," she said. "'E's in the City."

Martin had expected to hear that. Sergeant Babbington, as he knew, was at the moment talking to Edward Calcott at his office in Leadenhall Street.

"Then I should like to see Mrs. Calcott."

"If it's about insurance," Mary began.

Without a word Martin produced his warrant card and the eyes of Mary grew wide.

"The police," she said with evident delight. "Come this way, sir."

Martin followed her into a small white-painted drawing-room.

"It's the police, ma'am," announced Mary with satisfaction.

A faded woman, with iron-grey hair caught in a bun at the back of her head and wearing a plain black dress, rose to meet him.

"Mrs. Calcott?" asked Martin.

The woman bowed.

"Please sit down . . . er . . . Inspector."

"Thank you, Mrs. Calcott," said Martin.

The woman in front of him was, he noted, about sixty. She wore pince-nez and there was a thick gold ring on her wedding finger.

"It was your son I wanted to see," said Martin, "but I understand he has already left for the City."

"He always leaves the house by a quarter to nine, Inspector," she said. "Can I be of any help?"

"It is about last night," began Martin.

The face of Mrs. Calcott changed.

"You mean about the terrible death of poor Freddy Reeves?"

"Yes, Mrs. Calcott."

"I suppose you want to know what my boy was doing last night—when it happened?"

Martin nodded.

"He was at home and in bed by half-past ten," said Mrs. Calcott. "I went to his room and said good night to him myself."

"I see," said Martin. "At what time did he get up?"

"Mary will tell you that," said Mrs. Calcott, and pressed the bell.

Martin waited in silence until heavy footsteps announced the arrival of Mary.

"Mary, what time did you call Mr. Edward this morning?"

"Half-past seven, ma'am, as usual, with a cup of tea."

"When did you last see him before that?" asked Martin.

Mary hesitated.

"At dinner last night, sir," she answered.

She stood a moment in the doorway, then turned suddenly and left the room.

"I hope that is satisfactory, Inspector," said Mrs. Calcott.

"Quite, madam—as far as it goes," answered Martin, and rose to take his leave.

◆ ◆ ◆

"We cannot begin without Cyril," said Councillor Stanton. "It was he who originally asked me to call the meeting."

"Then he oughtn't to keep us waiting," responded Edward Calcott.

Naomi, sitting in the dining-room of Councillor Stanton's house, looked about her. They had always met in the dining-room and from sheer force of habit, she supposed, Joshua had assembled them there. It was a tactless thing to do. The big table, at which they had sat on so many occasions, seemed unusually large now that there were three vacant places in the circle.

Stanton sat at the head of the table in a large arm-chair. Naomi herself sat alone on one side and Edward was opposite.

Cyril Sidebotham, it seemed, had pressed for an urgent meeting of "those that were left." Naomi glanced again at the empty chairs. Valerie Beauchamp had always sat at the upper end of the table in the place now occupied by Joshua, whose own big chair at the foot of it yawned for a tenant. The chair beside her on the right should have been occupied by Adelaide Tring and that on the left by Freddy Reeves.

At the thought of Freddy a sharp pricking behind her eyes warned Naomi that she must fight again for self-control.

ILLUSTRATED BY JACK M. FAULKS

"Get out," he said, "if that's how you feel about it. Who cares what you think—you nasty little rat!"

Highbrows

Three out of seven had gone and from the last of them, Freddy, who had wanted to marry her, she had parted only a few minutes before his death in anger at his levity. But Freddy, who could be so wild and so obtuse, had left with her now only the memory of his young charm as her mind moved back into the past.

She looked across at Edward—clever, twisted Edward, who had started the whole business. His eyes were dark and sullen as he talked to the Councillor. There was no light behind his face. But he, too, had shown her something of that other side of things—more than anyone she had known, more, perhaps, than anyone she would ever know.

Edward, in their walks together, had often found words for all that Freddy and she had tried to grasp. Edward could not only see beauty, but could describe it. That was the real Edward—not the vehement, sarcastic creature who had allowed himself to be goaded into a mean and bitter mockery of Valerie Beauchamp.

Naomi felt again the tide of misery that swept into every corner of her being whenever her mind went back to the hoax and its monstrous consequences. It was no use telling herself that she had never really been a consenting party. She, too, had wanted to see Valerie Beauchamp humiliated and brought down. She had wanted it, perhaps more than anyone else, for she had suffered most from Valerie, suffered from her insufferable airs, her lack of vision, her complacent acceptance and exploitation of all that was second-rate.

"What is it, Naomi?"

The voice of Edward cut across her thoughts. She blinked and sat back in her chair.

"I am all right," she said.

"Cyril is very late," began Joshua Stanton.

At that moment, however, the door opened and Cyril Sidebotham entered hurriedly. His round, hairless face, usually so pink, was deadly pale, but he was dressed as carefully as usual with that slight accent upon the fashion which distinguished him from everyone else in the suburb.

"Sorry," he said, as he took the vacant chair beside Edward and opposite Naomi.

"Why are you so late?" demanded Edward bluntly.

Cyril Sidebotham blinked nervously.

"You won't believe it," he said, "but I fell asleep."

"Fell asleep?"

"Exhaustion," said Cyril. "I haven't slept properly for nights, not since this business started. That's why I asked for a meeting. We must decide what is to be done. Things can't go on like this. I'm at the end of my tether."

"What do you suggest?"

It was Edward speaking.

"I don't know what to suggest."

Edward looked at him contemptuously.

"If you've had us called together simply to witness an attack of nerves," he said, "we had better close the proceedings. Then you can go home and fall asleep again."

"Order, order"—it was Councillor Stanton speaking. "That, if I may say so, Edward, is not at all the proper spirit. We are here this evening to help each other. That, I take it, is why we have come together and we must try to see each other's point of view. My own position, if I may say so, has become quite intolerable. I am a Justice of the Peace. My name has become a headline."

Edward had tilted his chair back till he was in danger of overbalancing. He spoke without heat, as though weary of the whole affair.

"I would merely point out," he continued, "that there is a good deal more at stake than your notoriety as a public man."

"I agree."

It was Cyril Sidebotham speaking. He had risen from his chair and his tight little body, with its round head on top, was quivering with excitement.

"I am sorry, Joshua"—his voice was high and shrill—"but your reputation doesn't worry me in the least. You don't seem to realise the position. We are under sentence of death. Who will be the next victim? Will it be one of you? Will it be me? There is a hoodoo on this society. Where's it going to end?"

"Don't panic, Cyril," Edward sat up abruptly in his chair. "Pull yourself together."

Cyril Sidebotham was gripping the table and the skin across his knuckles was white and drawn.

"The police assume that one of us is a murderer. It's the money, of course. There's a price upon our heads. A thousand pounds, and each time it increases."

He pulled out a bright mauve handkerchief and held it to his lips.

"I can't stand it any longer," he continued. "I'm going to throw in my hand. I don't want this money. I won't touch another penny. I'm resigning from the society here and now. I'm entitled to do that. It's in the will. I shall write to Thoroughgood at once."

He ceased and there was a complete silence for a moment. Naomi looked at the miserable figure, trying hard not to feel contempt. She, too, had wanted to quit, but not in this way.

Joshua Stanton was speaking.

"Cyril Sidebotham"—at the formality of the address Naomi raised her head—"Cyril Sidebotham, do you realise what your action implies?"

"It implies that I'm going to clear out—neither more nor less."

"It implies," continued Stanton, "that you *suspect one of us*. Do you mean to suggest that *one of us*, Naomi, Edward or I, is planning to kill you in order to get your share of the estate?"

"I'm not suggesting anything."

"The implication is perfectly clear," persisted Stanton.

"Leave him alone, for God's sake!"

Edward had suddenly intervened. He

(*continued on next page*)

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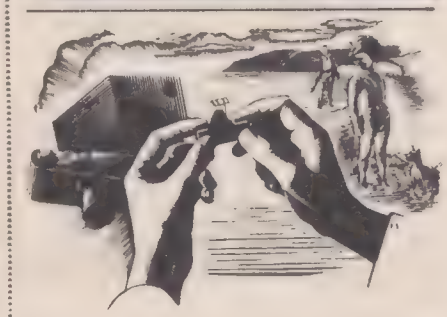

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Continuing The Legacy Murders

leaned forward and struck the table with his fists. He glared across at Cyril Sidebotham.

"Get out," he said, "if that's how you feel about it. Who cares what you think or imply—you nasty little rat."

"It is all very well to take the high and mighty line," retorted Cyril, "but what are you going to do yourself?"

"I'm going to sit tight. I'm not going to change my life in the smallest particular. I'm not going to suspect my friends or leave them to take the consequences, whatever they may be. As for you, Sidebotham, assume, if you like, that I am the murderer, and, let me tell you that if I were, you would be the next to go."

Councillor Stanton rapped on the table.

"Order . . . order! This is not the spirit in which to discuss the matter. I for one refuse to believe that anyone present here has anything to do with these dreadful crimes. I could never believe it. The question for us to decide is whether there is any step we can take?"

He had barely finished speaking when there came a knock upon the door.

"Come in," he called.

A maid appeared on the threshold.

"Inspector Martin, sir, of Scotland Yard."

"Show him into the morning-room, Ruth, and say I will be along in a minute."

"If you don't mind . . ."

All eyes were turned to the door. Inspector Martin came forward.

"I will see you here, if I may," concluded the Inspector.

Naomi, recovering from the shock of his sudden appearance, had an odd feeling of reassurance, almost of comfort, as she gazed upon the sturdy figure. It belonged so obviously to the normal world.

"May I sit down, Councillor Stanton?" he asked.

"Certainly, Inspector."

The Councillor indicated a chair.

"I am fortunate in having found you all together," continued the Inspector, who had sat down opposite Edward.

There was a short pause. Councillor Stanton looked round the table.

"We are all at your disposal," he said. "Do you wish to see us individually?"

Martin shook his head.

"Not for the moment, unless, of course, you prefer it. What I have to say can be said to all of you."

He paused and looked at them, one after another.

"I don't quite know," he said, "whether what I am going to say is strictly according to Cocker, but you are all intelligent people and fully alive to the situation. You must all realise, in fact, that, as individuals, each of you is more or less under suspicion."

Here he paused and again looked round the room.

"That being so," Inspector Martin continued, "it is my duty to warn you that you need none of you answer any of the questions I am about to put to you."

He pulled out a note-book and pencil and laid them on the table in front of him.

"I shall not keep any of you long," he said, "but I must ask—it is inevitable, I fear—where each of you happened to be between midnight and two-thirty this morning."

There was complete silence. Suddenly a shrill voice was piping.

"I can tell you exactly where I was," Cyril Sidebotham was saying. "I was in bed and asleep, if you want to know—in my flat in Priory Mansions. There is a night-porter and he will tell you that I never left the building."

The Inspector was writing rapidly.

He turned to Edward Calcott.

"I have already made inquiries about you, Mr. Calcott, in your absence from home. Your mother confirms the statement you made to Inspector Crosby at your office in Leadenhall Street. You spent last night at home?"

Edward nodded.

"That is so, Inspector."

The Inspector made a further note.

"I also was at home," volunteered Joshua Stanton, "and I was in bed by half-past ten. My wife will confirm that statement, though we don't . . . er . . . occupy the same bedroom."

Naomi noted a slight flush on the Councillor's cheeks as he made this announcement.

"She came to me with some hot whisky and water when I was in bed," he added hastily. "I had the beginnings of a cold. The remedy is old-fashioned, but none the worse for that."

"And this morning?"

"The first thing I knew about this dreadful business was when I opened the paper at breakfast."

There was a pause and Naomi realised that the Inspector was looking at her across the table.

"Now Miss Garnett."

"I was out with Mr. Reeves till late last night."

There came a simultaneous movement from the circle round the table. Naomi could scarcely recognise her own voice.

"Yes, Miss Garnett?"

"We dined at Gow's in the Strand and afterwards went to the Ballet at Covent Garden."

Naomi swallowed. She must keep her voice steady at all costs. There was no need why it should tremble. There was nothing to fear.

"After that we went to a night club off the Tottenham Court Road. I can't remember its name for the moment, but you can easily find out."

Martin was writing rapidly.

"And then?"

"Then he drove me home."

"At what time did you get home?"

"It must have been nearly two o'clock," said Naomi. "Mr. Reeves left me at the gate and drove away. He must have been . . . killed only a few minutes later."

"Thank you, Miss Garnett."

The Inspector's voice was very smooth.

"There is just one small matter," began Councillor Stanton.

"Yes?"

"We think that your attention should be drawn to the companion and relative of the late Valerie Beauchamp. I refer to Miss Lavinia Brown, now resident at 'Avilion'!"

Inspector Martin nodded.

"That, Councillor, is unnecessary. We are already giving our attention to the matter.

Inspector Martin continued to write.

Inspector Martin, passing through the gate of Councillor Stanton's garden, turned to the right and walked briskly along the road. He had not gone twenty yards before there fell on his ears the measured footfalls of a constable, who soon came into view and passed him on the other side of the road. Neither took any notice of the other.

All the Esoterics were now under observation, at any rate until he had checked their alibis. Not that he really expected anything much to come of these precautions. It was the maddening feature of this affair that the obvious thing was, by any normal human standard, also the impossible thing. The Esoterics were an odd lot, but not the stuff of which multiple murderers were made.

Edward Calcott? Not an amiable young man. Obviously one who had missed his way or had not yet found himself. The sort of young man who might often feel like murder but not the sort of man to make a practice of it.

Joshua Stanton? A very respectable gentleman and something of a terror on the Bench to the smaller fry among criminals. Obviously neither bad enough nor clever enough to attempt any of the major misdemeanours.

Cyril Sidebotham? The poor little man had not the courage to break the neck of a rabbit.

There remained the mysterious person, not of the Esoterics, who had killed Valerie Beauchamp and left those finger-prints on the tooth-glass and the rake and the plate.

There remained also, Lavinia Brown, who walked about crazy and full of hate, at unusual hours, and saw footsteps in the dew.

Well, he would have a word with Lavinia Brown—and so to bed.

A moment later he rang the front door bell at "Avilion." A slatternly maid showed him into a small room on the left of the hall, and very shortly Lavinia Brown swept towards him from the door, wearing a curious dress of black taffeta. Her eyes were bright and she waved him with a peculiar smile to a chair.

"I was waiting for you, Inspector," she said. "I was sure you would come."

She smiled at him with a pinched affability.

"You want to see me about the death of Freddy Reeves. Shot through the head—so they say. I hoped, as you know, that he would be hanged. I saw in him the executioner, but there is one more deadly than he—to whom he has fallen a victim."

Inspector Martin showed nothing of what he felt.

"You remind me, Miss Brown, that your views regarding the murder of Adelaide Tring were misleading. I have come this evening to ask whether you are prepared to give me an account of your movements last night."

"My movements?"

"Please."

"You want to know what I was doing last night?"

"Of course, madam, you are under no compulsion. I am merely requesting you to tell me as much as you choose regarding your movements between midnight and two o'clock. Were you here, for example, at home and in bed."

"No, Inspector, I was not."

"That is an important admission and I would urge you, in your own interest, to be more explicit."

"I went out—as I often do."

"At what time?"

"I could not rest. She needed my presence. I did not notice the time. I have very little sense of time."

"Can you tell me at what hour you returned?"

"It was striking one when I passed the cemetery gates."

"The Highwood Cemetery?"

"Yes, Inspector."

"You had it in your mind, then, to visit the grave of Valerie Beauchamp?"

Lavinia Brown bent her head in a solemn gesture.

"But the cemetery is closed at night-fall."

"Not to me."

"You did then, in fact, visit the grave of your dead friend?"

"I had a duty to perform."

"May I inquire as to its nature?"

"You would not understand."

"I am sorry, Miss Brown, but I should be grateful if, again, you would be a little more explicit."

Lavinia Brown gave a short laugh.

"You want me to help you to discover who killed Adelaide Tring and Freddy Reeves. You will never find out—not till the work is completed. I have no concern with your law. No harm can come to the ministers of a higher justice than that of your courts. I go armed against any human intervention."

"Armed?" repeated Martin.

Lavinia Brown laughed again and her eyes glittered.

"You mistake me, Inspector. I do not refer to material weapons."

Inspector Martin spoke at a venture.

"If you carry a pistol or fire-arm, Miss Brown, you are required to hold a licence for it," he said sharply.

She looked at him slyly.

"I did not say that I carried a pistol, Inspector."

"Have you any such weapon?"

"Find it—if you can."

Inspector Martin shut his note-book. He would get no further, he decided, by interrogation.

"Very well, madam," he said quietly. "I shall trouble you no further this evening."

Five minutes later he was talking to Sergeant Babbington who was waiting within view of the gate. "Watch closely to-night," he said. "If Miss Brown should leave the house, let me know at once."

"Anything else, sir?"

"Not for the moment. To-morrow I may apply for a search warrant, but the best we can do at present is to keep Miss Brown under observation without alarming her."

"Very good, Inspector."

"Good night, Babbington."

"Good night, sir."

Inspector Martin went thoughtfully upon his way.

Find it—if you can.

Was he at last on the track of something definite?

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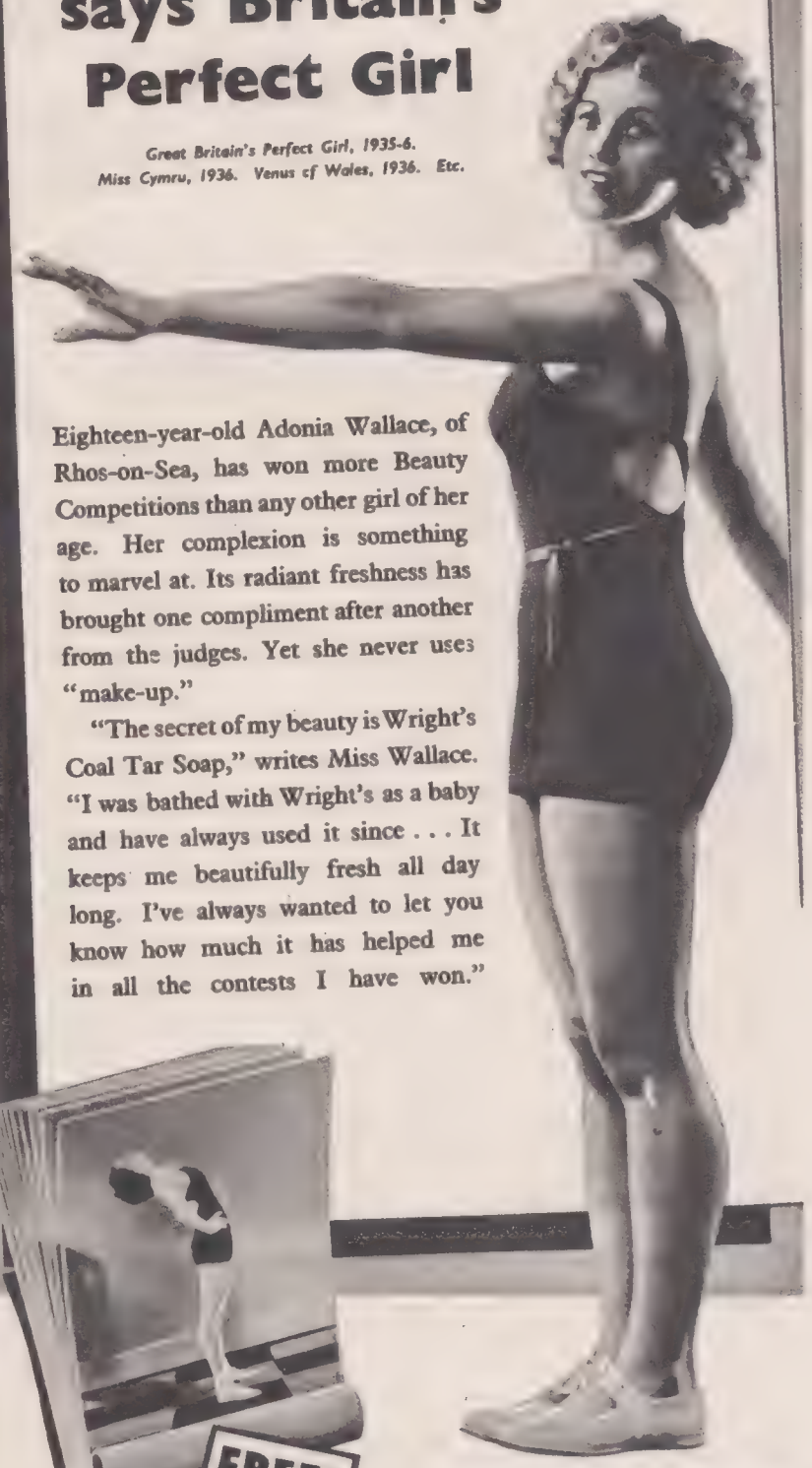

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After living for several delightful months on a dairy farm in Kent, where they kept cows, and pigs, and chickens, and made butter and cream, I asked the farmer's wife to give me an outline of her day's activities.

Her day begins at six. Her husband gets up half an hour earlier, goes downstairs, lights the fire, and makes her a cup of tea. Her first duty, after she is dressed, is to attend to the baby chicks, of which, during the spring and summer months, she usually has several hundred, in various stages of fluffy growth. She lets them out, waters them, and gives them a feed of dry mash.

This done, she returns to the house, sees to the children, and prepares breakfast for her husband, who has, by now finished his milking. By seven he is off on the milk round and his wife prepares the children's meals of sandwiches and cake and sends them off to school, after which she lets out the hens and gives them a feed of corn.

This is a mere preliminary to their serious breakfast, intended as a sort of cocktail to stimulate their appetites and tempt them to vigorous scratching. She also liberates the ducks, having prepared for them a breakfast of hot mash. Next there is the incubator to be attended to, the eggs to be turned and cooled, the lamps to be trimmed, and the oil tanks filled—a nasty, messy job.

By this time it is roughly nine o'clock. For an hour, the farmer's wife is busy in the house, making beds, dusting rooms, washing breakfast things, preparing a hot meal of middlings, various makes of chicken food, and laying mixture for the hens, who, having scratched their fill, are now eager and ravenous.

As the farmer is soon due back from his milk round, dinner for him and the farm hands has to be prepared. This dinner, the chief meal of the day, is at twelve or twelve-thirty, and consists of meat and two vegetables and a hot pudding. The farmer's wife excels in her puddings, which are always delicious, nourishing, and light.

After dinner, a few minutes' rest before she embarks on her afternoon's programme unless it is Monday, washing day, when no rest is possible. This post-prandial programme seems even fuller and more hectic than that of the morning: washing up again, the hens and young chicks to be fed once more, a search through the many hen houses, nests, and barns, for eggs, and tea to be prepared.

Sometimes the farmer's wife gives a hand with the milking; twice a week she has an orgy of cooking, baking bread, and pasties and cakes; three times a week there is butter making, while she must also attend to the clotted cream, setting and skimming the milk, churning, scalding,

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HER WORK *is Never* DONE

WOMAN to WOMAN by Henrietta LESLIE

and scrubbing the churns, in the cool, tiled dairy that smells always so sweet and fresh.

Next, there are the foster-mothers and chicken houses to be cleaned, an even dirtier and more exhausting job than attending to the incubator. The perches and dropping boards require scraping every day, and once a fortnight the floors are scraped and scrubbed as well.

At dusk, the ducks and hens go punctually to bed. But dusk, in high summer, can be as late as ten o'clock, and only then is the farmer's wife at liberty to pause and rest.

"What a strenuous life," I cried.

"In the winter it's easier," she answered. "Then, of course, we can do little after tea. We make all our clothes in the winter; I do all my knitting; jumpers and pullovers for George and me, dresses and stockings for the children. The summer's a tiring time, but it's lovely, too."

For, in the summer, there is haymaking, when old and young, man and woman, turn to the fields, leaving the farmer's wife to prepare tea for twenty or twenty-five thirsty workers. And the summer, too, is fruit time. My farmer's wife picks all her own fruit, bottles it, makes jam and jelly of it. She also pickles vegetables besides brewing all sorts of delicious, heady wines from plants and flowers that flourish in the hedgerows.

She fits in many things somehow, in her elastic day, though the chickens, from birth to death, seem to take up an unduly large share of her time. From December till May, relays of eggs are placed in the incubator and left there for roughly three weeks. These require much care, having to be turned four times daily. Directly they are hatched out, the young birds must be cherished, constantly fed, and their habitations kept clean. At the close of their mortal span, they still demand attention. My farmer's wife prepares all her table birds for market with her own hands, plucking her chickens and her ducks, trussing and cleaning them, ready for the cook.

"Is it profitable?" I asked her, having once heard how hard it is to make a living out of chicken farming.

"It's profitable as long as you can work it in with other things, as I do," she responded. "But to make a living out of chicken farming alone, you need to keep a minimum of at least four thousand birds, and then, honestly, it's scarcely worth it. But above all, you have to like the life."

There was a family of little pigs running about among the hay stacks. A huge sow had farrowed. Three of her progeny were weakly born. The farmer's wife took possession of them, carried them off into her kitchen, laid them in a box, wrapped them in flannel with a hot-water bottle to comfort them, and fed them on warm milk and whiskey. They looked rather charming and pathetic lying there, so pink and clean, not much larger than three big rats.

There is a pretty flower garden in the front of the farmhouse, and the flowers in it are also the concern of the farmer's wife.

"I see to them in my spare time," she told me.

In her spare time, also, she mends the family clothes and listens to the radio.

"And when do you rest?" I asked.

"Never. At least, not in summer."

And she and her husband rarely go for holidays.

"You can't when you have animals depending on you," she said. But she is always cheerful and you rarely hear her complain of fatigue or of headache.

"Of course, in our job, there are great disappointments," she explained. "Last year, for instance, the frost came just when the buds were set and killed off all our fruit. And then you get queer illnesses among the chickens, or something goes wrong with the eggs and the little ones die in the shell. Or, again, you hatch them nicely out and a fox comes along, or a cat or a dog. Yes, you get disappointments; so you do in every walk of life."

The life of a farmer's wife is, on the whole, a solitary one, for her home is isolated, and she has few near neighbours. Moreover, her lot is, domestically, harder than that of many women who live in towns, for the majority of farms are old-fashioned houses, with no labour-saving contrivances. In the farm in which I lived there was no water laid on.

When they want a bath, therefore, they have to carry it out to the great cauldron they use, fed by vast logs which, in burning, send up lovely woodland smells, somehow producing a Shakespearean effect.

Yet, hard though it is, these people lead a happy life, an open-air life, with freedom at their doorstep and the changing seasons as their sole dictator.

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"Clear out of this, you she-devil!" he roared furiously. "I'll have a Euralian girl . . ."

WE ALL *make* MISTAKES

BY a coincidence Mr. Stanley Cunfax had just enunciated "*Errare humanum est*" when Mrs. Simmons came into our radius of vision. To me she was simply a fine, healthy-looking young woman wearing furs and snow-boots, but Stanley hailed her apparition as a timely illustration of the great truth he had just stated.

"By Jiminy, if that isn't Mrs. Simmons! Sylvia Priestman that was. Only daughter of my old friend, James Priestman of Sevenoaks. Even *you* must have heard of Jimmy Priestman! He's a millionaire, race-horse owner and all the rest of it. Now, that girl made a mistake if you like. She married beneath her. A——"

I didn't care whom Sylvia Priestman had married and said as much. We were on the landing-ground at Fort Belcher, the time was seven in the morning, and it was bitterly cold. The pilots, who were standing about waiting for a weather report to permit their taking-off, looked warm enough, but I had not been long enough in Northern Canada to become acclimatised. Seeing that there was no prospect of a speedy departure, I suggested to my friend that we might do worse than follow the erring Mrs. Simmons into the shed-like waiting-room whither she had disappeared.

"All right," Stanley said. "Before I introduce you I'll tell you something, though. Two years back she ran away with a pelt-trader called Jack Simmons, a regular roughneck from the wilds. We all warned her not to, but she would. Poor kid! I expect she's learned her mistake by now!"

Having thus warned me, he led the way into the waiting-room where Mrs. Simmons had a roaring stove to herself. When I saw her complexion and her eyes I thought to myself that the pelt-trader had shown discrimination when he had selected this particular millionaire's daughter to run away with.

Stanley, who was old enough to be her father, greeted her after the fashion of an old family friend who had decided to forgive, "I hope things have turned out better than I feared," was implicit in his voice as he enquired after her husband. Then he began to stammer, with his eyes on her left hand. I followed his gaze and noticed it was ringless.

"I hope," Stanley began, stammering.

The girl's laugh might have concealed any emotion.

"If you're looking for my wedding-ring it's not there. I threw it in Jack's face a few days ago."

"You've left him?"

"Yes. When a man is half-mad with drink and threatening to strike you, you have to leave him."

"I warned you of his habits," Stanley said.

She laughed again.

"YES, you warned me. You and all my other friends and relatives prophesied disaster if I married that penniless, uncultured trapper. Well, you can tell them now how right they were. Slavery, hardship, loneliness—they all came true. Look at my poor hands!"

She spread them out in the light of the stove for our inspection. They were strong, shapely hands, but they were not the sort of hands one would have expected the daughter of a millionaire to possess.

"Aren't they disgraceful?" she asked, "The result of paddling a *kyack*, cooking and chopping firewood. Stanley, you must mention my hands when you meet my friends. They will so enjoy saying, 'Well, we warned her.'"

Stanley moved uncomfortably. He hides a kind heart under a somewhat pompous manner, and I knew he was resolutely restraining himself from saying, "I told you so!"

"*Errare humanum est*," he said again. "And after all you were very young."

"Nineteen," Mrs. Simmons told him. "And at nineteen one doesn't pause to consider. Anyway, this is what I want you to tell my friends. . . ."

Of course, the story that followed was no concern of mine. But, if Mrs. Simmons wished to recount her matrimonial misadventure in my hearing, that was her affair. Wild horses wouldn't have separated me from that hot stove. And anyway she spoke with a sort of defiant ring in her voice that implied that she didn't mind if the whole world heard what she had to say. Indeed one almost gathered that, like most angry women, she craved an audience.

So I stayed where I was and eavesdropped shamelessly. And it was as if she flashed a series of pictures before my eyes. I saw Sylvia Priestman as she had been at nineteen. Gay, flattered, beautiful. Frequenter of winter sports resorts, Palm Beach and the French Riviera; she had graced the London season.

But at nineteen one doesn't appreciate one's luck. Not even the thought of the parties and yacht outings she was renouncing could hold her back when Jack Simmons flung her the "come-hither." At her father's shooting-lodge in the Adirondacks where he was employed as a guide she first met him. And for the width of his shoulders his curly hair and the lilt in his voice she gave up everything that was hers by heritage.

In vain did her friends and relatives—not least amongst whom was Stanley Cunfax, now gloomily listening to the tale of fulfilled jeremiads—warn her against her madness. When her father struck her name out of his will she only laughed. They warned her that Jack Simmons was a rough-neck, a hard liver and a gambler. Her inadequate answer was that she loved him and he loved her.

"Lord, how you threw yourself away!" Stanley groaned. "There were dozens of

(*continued on page* 30)

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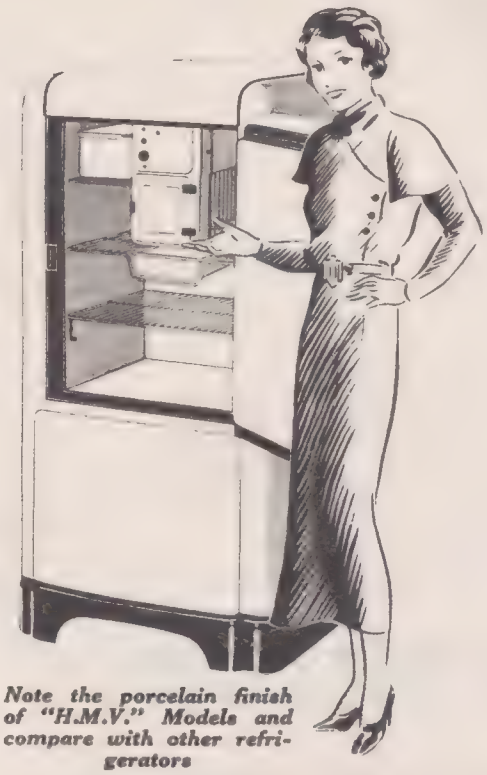

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Did you know that the latest method, recommended by beauty specialists, for improving the shape of the mouth is—just chewing?

Of course we've all heard about these tiresome exercises that you do in front of a looking glass, making chewing movements with your mouth, and feeling rather foolish if anyone comes along and catches you at it! Yet these movements are definitely good for the shape of your mouth. The obvious solution is to have something to chew, and preferably something that won't add to your weight.

Women are finding that chewing gum solves the problem, and to chew something pleasant creates saliva which is a direct aid to good digestion. Chewing gum is a freshener, too, when you are feeling tired.

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A few minutes with it every day will keep you marvellously fit and slim—it's one of the safest and sanest ways to "reduce" and it gives you lots of fun.

Remember its name—the "Puck" Punch Ball—and it costs only 6d. Manufactured by the Grovewell Rubber Co., Ltd., 656 Forest Road, E.17.

Continuing WE ALL *make* MISTAKES

other fine young fellows. Jim Dunsman, for instance. He's just become chairman of the Osto Oil Company and is worth a pot."

"What I've missed!" Mrs. Simmons cried tragically. "Well, I was very young. I couldn't look ahead, could I?"

Her story swept on past Jim Dunsman who is now chairman of the Osto Oil Company. We left him, a glittering what-might-have-been on the horizon of the too-late country, and went north with the pelt-trader.

Then every word she spoke heightened our appreciation of her folly. For she who had been born to luxury and comfort had been dragged to the cruelty of the trail. By *kyack* canoe, *komatik* sled and the blistering toil of snow-shoe they had progressed to the virgin fastnesses of the Far North. Jack Simmons broke trail and the tender girl he had married had to plod in the tracks he made. She learned frostbite, starvation, loneliness and terror. Pack on back and rifle in hand she followed the mate she'd chosen.

They'd no luck, and Jack said they must push on. It was a saga she spun for us, a black and silver saga that wound through untamed pine forests, up mighty rivers and across frozen lakes. Snow-capped mountains hemmed them off from civilisation. They came to the lands where men still dread the Wendigo and Euralian Indians prowl.

And still no luck. Alaska proved for them no promised land, and they almost perished in a forest fire. Here Stanley interposed that she must have begun to regret things. And the way Mrs. Simmons laughed gave us to understand that she had indeed.

"... we'd to lie in a creek while the trees blazed and crackled overhead. Yes, I certainly did wish myself back in Sevenoaks. The birds! You could see them falling in the smoke. ..."

Still, as she admitted herself without prompting from Stanley she'd only her own folly to thank. If she'd been wiser she'd have been sunning herself on the Riviera with the embryo chairman of an oil company at her side. Or enjoying a party at the Ritz. ... Anyway, not crouching in that luke-warm creek among the dying birds.

They survived the fire and pushed on. And at last when it seemed she could go no farther they came to a lake dotted with pine-clad islands. Loons and divers flew around them in curiosity. A great moose, knee-deep in the reeds stared at their rifles, unafraid. Between forest and lake there was a carpet of tiny Arctic flowers and all was ringed in by hills rising to dizzy, snow-capped heights. But I gather what most attracted Jack Simmons were indications that wolverines, silver foxes and beavers were there for the trapping.

So they stayed. With herculean labour they built a hut hard by the water's edge. Untrimmed logs were the walls and floor; sun-dried pelts were the carpets. Jack made the table and chairs and an iron stove was brought by reindeer sledge from an Eskimo mission station a hundred miles to the West. There were bunks in the living-room, piles of pelts and a litter of trapping paraphernalia. Fish and caribou meat were the main articles of diet. They'd to lay in stores of provender against the dark winter months when snow buried them to the roof, and in the summer the mosquitoes made life a sleepless torture despite smudge fires.

"I prophesied you wouldn't like the life," Stanley commented.

The trapper prospered. He traded pelts against a dog team and a *komatik* with steel runners. I thought I caught a note of wistful pride in the voice of the millionaire's daughter when she mentioned those steel runners. But if it was there it was lost on Stanley. Doubtless, he was wisely reflecting that Jim Dunsman could have given her a yacht.

The tragic recital went on. Blizzards and daring wolves and treacherous huskies who snapped at the hands that fed them. But even there life had certain compensations. Visitors, for instance. Patrolmen, traders, missionaries and so forth. Uncultured people in moccasins and fur caps and not nearly as picturesque and handsome as their representatives on the films. Oh, and some Euralian Indians who made a fishing encampment on the east side of the lake.

It was pretty soon after the coming of the Euralians that Crinky Weston flew over in his Hawkland junior. He was a forest watcher making a pioneer flight. He zoomed low over their shack eight times before he dared to land. Finally he made the attempt and came down safely. They watched him clamber out of the machine. A short, stocky man with a cheerful face. When he and Jack stood face to face they roared blasphemies at each other and smote each other in the chest. For they were old pals. Chums in fact. One gathers Crinky was a bit shy of Mrs. Simmons at first. When Jack introduced them he grinned and called her "ma'am."

They took him to the shack and treated him as an honoured guest. With Mrs. Simmons' words a whiff came to me of coffee, flapjacks and sizzling trout. An aromatic scent rose from the white wood-ash in the stove and through the open doorway they could see a solitary Indian fisherman paddling his canoe across the unruffled surface of the lake.

"I suppose you'd to wait on them like a servant?" Stanley grunted in disgust.

She who had graced the London season admitted that was indeed the shameful truth. She added drily that it was lucky that she hadn't been born a Chinaman of high degree whose honour was proportionate to the length of his finger-nails.

"You couldn't scour a frying-pan with long finger-nails," she pointed out, "as it was I'd a bandaged hand and Crinky had to help with the washing-up while Jack fed the huskies. Crinky had arrived early in the morning, you see. After that Jack said he'd take him round the traps—leaving me to do my work in peace. They took rifles and Pedro; he was the most amiable of the huskies. ... Crinky wanted to shoot a wolverine. ..."

While the men were away she did her work. When the short Arctic day was closing in she prepared the evening meal.

They were later than she had expected. When they did appear she saw by Jack's white face, bright eyes and queer, quarrelsome manner that all was not well. He smelt strongly of rye-whisky. Crinky—who was not affected—drew her aside and whispered that they'd been visiting the Euralian encampment, and Jack had had a couple of drinks too many with the Indians.

Jack wouldn't touch the food she had prepared. His temper was ragged and his speech was thick. She tried to humour him, but he wouldn't be humoured. He kept saying mean, malicious things. When Crinky told him roughly to shut his head, he cursed him.

Suddenly the quarrel blazed up. An edged taunt had struck home and she found herself on her feet. Jack too had risen. Face to face with the table between them, man and woman spat insults at each other. Bitter, unforgivable things were said. The trapper's fists were clenched and his burning eyes never left her face. Suddenly he jerked his thumb over his shoulder and spoke in growling fury.

"Clear out of this, you she-devil. Crinky, take this screeching little fool out of my sight or I'll wring her neck. I'll have a Euralian girl to live with me from now on."

That was when Mrs. Simmons flung her wedding-ring in his face and told him what she thought. He was cowed by her tirade. She uttered words that stung and lashed while Crinky sat silent, looking most unhappy.

"Well, I'm glad you gave the brute a piece of your mind," Stanley said. "I foresaw from the very beginning that something like that would be the termination of your romance. You were foolish, Sylvia, not to listen to your elders. It was inevitable that the rough, uneducated blackguard must eventually show himself in his true colours."

I thought there was something almost feline in the glance Mrs. Simmons shot him.

"Just so, my dear prophetic friend," she said. "But I was very young and when one's young one makes mistakes. Anyway I fully realised mine that night. And when Crinky offered to take me away in his plane as soon as it was light next morning I jumped at the chance of a speedy escape."

She and Crinky were astir before the sun had topped the wooded ridges. They left Jack lying in his bunk. Loons and divers rose in terror at the sound of Crinky's engine. When the just risen sun was striking a golden path across the surface of the lake she climbed into the passenger seat without a backward glance at the shack, and they took off. They narrowly cleared the trees and swung south-east, and with their going the great silence once more closed upon the lake.

"He—Crinky—brought you here?" Stanley had to prompt her for her voice had faltered and stopped.

She turned as from some secret vision.

"Yes. He took me here. The plane covered all those weary leagues that had taken us months, in ten hours. We came down in the dusk and the engine was coughing and spluttering because there was hardly a drain of petrol left in the tanks. Crinky had run big risks. But I'd realised nothing. I—I just wasn't thinking.

"He'd to lift me from the plane. I was numb and stiff. He took my arm and made me go with him. I didn't care where. I was just dazed with misery.

"It wasn't the hotel we went to. It was a bare, strange place. Then a man in a white coat came. I thought he was some sort of clerk till I heard Crinky say, 'Doctor, you must attend this lady right now. She's been bitten by a mad husky.'"

We sat up with exclamations. Mrs. Simmons met our horrified gaze and nodded.

"Pedro had rabies. When Jack and Crinky were in the woods he suddenly flew at them foaming at the mouth, and Jack shot him. But he knew there must be rabies in the team; Pedro would have infected the others. Both Jack and I had been bitten recently. The nearest Pasteur Institute was here—and Crinky could only take one passenger. Do you understand now what Jack had done? He'd bluffed me, with Crinky's help, into being the one who went. I guess he knew the only way to make me leave him! He stayed to risk the most awful, lingering death there is, alone in the shack. In those flying conditions it was long odds against Crinky being able to get back in time."

We were speechless. Suddenly she smiled at us through tears that were tears of sheer pride.

"*Errare humanum est!* And thank God who made it so. Crinky had brought Pedro's head for examination. The doctors diagnosed canine hysteromania; it's a virulent form of rabies, but not communicable to human beings. So Jack's safe. And, Stanley, you can tell my sorrowing relatives——"

A short, stocky man in pilot's kit had appeared in the doorway.

"We can take off, Mrs. Simmons," he called.

She sprang to her feet.

"You can tell them I've gone back to where I've left my heart," she cried; and by the glory in her eyes I knew how greatly Stanley Cunfax and her relatives had been mistaken.

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If you have an ugly, flabby, sagging bust, then **Formosa Lotion cannot fail** to make it firm and high. After only a few applications, you will notice your bust taking on a new charm, losing those ugly flabby, sagging lines that have worried you for years. Simply apply the lotion to the skin at night, and in **a few weeks** you will have those fascinating curves which are woman's greatest source of attraction. Formosa Lotion tones up and tightens the muscles of the bust, at the same time acting as a tonic for the skin. It definitely does NOT enlarge the bust. What Formosa Lotion has done for others it can do for you. Do not let an ugly, drooping bust line spoil your feminine allure any longer. Guaranteed harmless. **The full 4 weeks' treatment costs only 10/-, post free in plain sealed package.**

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There is no reason why you should have a heavy, oversized bust when Formosa "FOAM" Cream will remould and reduce it—**an inch a week**—giving those lovely slender, youthful lines, that ONLY Formosa can give. No matter what you may have used before, **Formosa "FOAM" Cream will succeed where all others have failed.** Simply apply this wonderful non-greasy reducing preparation to the skin, and you will be amazed at the results within a few days. Pleasant to use, Formosa "FOAM" Cream treatment is a tonic for the skin, and will definitely reduce the bust, and any part of the body, leaving the skin satin smooth and refreshed. Absolutely harmless. **The full 4 weeks' treatment is sent privately in plain sealed package, post free. Price 10/-.**

TESTIMONIALS

Miss N. L. T. writes: "After using your Formosa Cream, I developed my bust almost 5 inches. I might mention that I have tried several other preparations without any success."

Mrs. J. W. writes: "Your treatment for making the bust firm is simply marvellous. Really, I thought it was impossible for my bust to go back to its normal position."

Miss L. B.: "I have reduced my bust 3 inches by using your Foam Cream. Please send me another supply to use on my ankles."

GUARANTEE

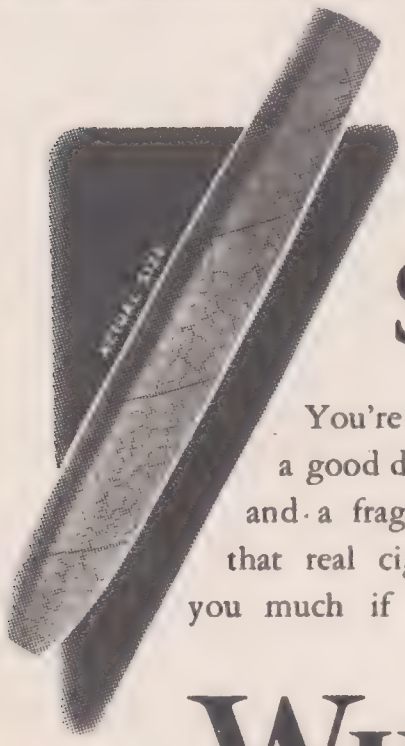
If you are not satisfied with Formosa Preparations, your money will be refunded in full.

NEVER FAILED

Formosa Cream, Lotion and "Foam" Cream have been used with amazing success by thousands of women including artists' models, stars on stage and screen, and have not yet been known to fail. If you have been unsuccessful with other preparations, remember that Formosa can give you those rich, fascinating curves that modern fashion demands. Do not hesitate.

SEND NOW

FORMOSA PREPARATIONS
(Dept. 47) : KINGSTON : SURREY



Mid-day Saturday

You're free for the week-end . . . a good dinner, a chair in the garden and a fragrant cigar to smoke. But that real cigar fragrance needn't cost you much if you buy Wills's Whiffs.

WILLS'S WHIFFS

HAVANA FLAVOUR AT REASONABLE PRICES

3 for 6d. 6 for 1/- 12 for 2/-

WW22

WHAT COULD I DO?

I Was Almost a

NERVOUS WRECK

My Job Was Slipping From Me

"I TOOK YEAST-VITE AND GAINED A NEW LIFE OF HAPPINESS"

HERE is another letter of praise to Yeast-Vite—another eloquent tribute which will carry a message of hope and cheer to all who are Run-Down, In Pain, Nervy, and Depressed in Spirits.

Read His Letter!

Dear Sirs, Durham.

I want to thank you for the wonderful relief Yeast-Vite Tablets have given me. ***I was very nervous and windy some time ago, and that goes a long way as to whether you succeed in life, especially when working in an office.***

I always pity nervous people, because I understand how dreadful it is to be nervous, and how it kind of keeps you down in life.

I was almost a nervous wreck myself, and I could see my job in the office gradually slipping from me; but what could I do? I tried (——) with no success. I tried other nerve tonics—still no success.

Then I tried your marvellous Yeast-Vite Tablets, which results in my wonderful recovery.

Now you understand why I am so pleased, why I praise Yeast-Vite so to my friends. Yes, because they have given me a new life of happiness, which otherwise was a life of misery.

If only those poor wretches who have committed suicide because of their nerves, because of depression, had spared a few coppers and bought some Yeast-Vite instead of giving up heart, what a still more wonderful reputation these marvellous Tablets would have received. However, I must conclude, but before I do so I want to thank you once again for Yeast-Vite.

Good-bye, Friends. Yours faithfully (Signed) C.S.

YOUR QUICK HEALTH TIME-TABLE

FROM	TO	TIME
NERVE PAINS -	*Glorious Relief* -	In 5/15 MIN.
HEADACHES - -	*Deliverance* - -	In 5/15 MIN.
LASSITUDE - - -	*Vim and Vigour*	In 10/20 MIN.
DEPRESSION - -	*Buoyant Energy*	In 10/20 MIN.
"NERVES" - - -	*Steadiness* - -	In 10/20 MIN.
INDIGESTION - -	*Keen Appetite* -	In 15/30 MIN.
EXHAUSTION - -	*Animation* - -	In 15/30 MIN.
SLEEPLESSNESS	*Calm Repose* -	In 30/60 MIN.
RHEUMATISM -	*Pain Relief* - -	In 24 HOURS
CONSTIPATION -	*Regularity* - -	In 36 HOURS
IMPURE BLOOD -	*Purification* - -	In 36 HOURS

YEAST-VITE IS LIFE!

In a few minutes you feel its wonderful benefits . . . the restoring action which chases away Depression, the Digestive action which ends Stomach Weakness, the Stimulating action which restores Strength, the Sedative action which brings sweet Sleep and ends agonising Pain!

NO CURE —NO PAY

Simply obtain a 1/3 Bottle of "YEAST-VITE" Brand Quick Tonic Tablets from any Chemist. Try the treatment at our risk. and if you are not THOROUGHLY CONVINCED of the WONDERFUL POWER, PERFECT SAFETY and TONIC PROPERTIES of "YEAST-VITE," return the empty carton to Irving's Yeast-Vite, Ltd., Watford, within one month of purchase and your money will be refunded at once and in full without quibble or question.

Yeast-Vite

Brand

Tonic Tablets, Sold Everywhere, 3d., 6d., 1/3, 3/- & 5/-

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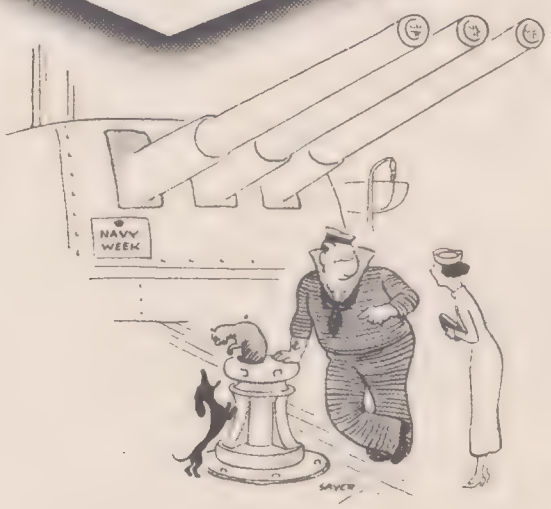
CAPSTAN
they're blended better



THEY'RE WILLS'S 10 for 6d. 20 for 11½d.
PLAIN OR CORK TIPPED CIGARETTES

Good News for Foot Sufferers

Thousands of people spend pounds in endeavouring to alleviate the agonising pains of foot troubles in one form or another.

It comes as very welcome news indeed to them that a well-known specialist has discovered a formula consisting of oxygenated salts and herbal essences which will give instant relief at negligible cost.

No matter how long you have been troubled with rheumatic or gouty pains, how obstinate your corns or callouses, how much your feet swell, itch, burn, perspire, or ache, bathing them with NOVOPINE FOOT ENERGISER is a quick and *sure* remedy. The feet are left cool and fresh. Circulation is stimulated, the muscles are reinvigorated.

Enjoy day-long foot comfort—bathe your feet every morning with Novopine Foot Energiser—whether you play tennis, hike, or merely walk. Full 8 oz. packet (18-20 foot baths) 1/- at Boots, Timothy Whites, Taylors, and other chemists. If difficult to obtain, post free 1/- from: Astropine, Ltd., Yeo Street, Bromley-by-Bow, London, E.3.

A useful booklet of hints on photography, entitled "The Path to Trouble-Free Photography," has just been issued by Zeiss Ikon. It is an attractive little publication, amusingly illustrated, and slips easily into the pocket or handbag. Those desirous of making the most of their holiday snaps will do well to ask Zeiss Ikon, Ltd., Mortimer House, Mortimer Street, London, W.1, for a free copy of this excellent little book. It is not only full of useful hints, but explains quite simply and clearly the fundamentals of photography, and includes an exposure table.

I NAMED my PRICE

IT was queer that I should run across Wilbur Rawlinson just when I did. Queer, because not only was I on my last legs, so to speak; but Wilbur Rawlinson was, to my way of thinking, the root cause of all my troubles. Had he not, four years before, cruelly deceived my sister, I don't suppose I would have been knocking on people's doors begging them to buy vacuum cleaners; nor would I have been wondering how long it would be before my firm discovered that I had "borrowed" twenty-five pounds from them by faking my sales-sheets.

But for Rawlinson I would have finished my course at the agricultural college—which I had commenced on leaving the Army—and then taken a job as a farm-bailiff. And I would have made a success of the job, too; farming is the only thing (in the way of work) that I have *wanted* to do.

I was twenty-four when I came out of the Army, and commenced my farming course. I had been attending the agricultural college every day for a fortnight when, arriving home one afternoon, I found my youngest sister being ordered out of the house by my dour-faced father.

She was only nineteen, and had been in "service" away from home for nearly a year; away from home because my married sister, who managed the home, hated the sight of her. Why, I don't know—unless she envied her looks, for Mabel was a really pretty girl.

When I saw it was absolutely useless to reason further with them, I turned to Mabel, who was sobbing pitifully, and told her not to worry—I'd look after her.

I decided to throw up the college and all thought of becoming a farmer; and instead, use what little money I had managed to save in the Army to furnish a little home.

After a good deal of trouble I succeeded in finding a four-roomed cottage to my liking. It was miles away from our family home, and on the outskirts of a big town.

The months went by; Mabel had her baby; and I, I was still without a regular job. All I could find to do were casual jobs on farms or temporary driving jobs for a "cut-price" haulage contractor.

In spite of all the hardships I endured, though, I never reproached Mabel . . . about the baby, I mean. Her only "sin" was that she trusted a rotter; a handsome, smooth-tongued rotter, eight years her senior.

When she showed me his photograph, I took it away from her. "I'll keep that," I said; for she was going to burn it. "I've an idea I shall run across that reptile one day."

I carried that photograph in my wallet for nearly four years, and then—only last year—I found I had to make a call on a Mrs. W. Rawlinson. (Rawlinson *wasn't* the name, of course.)

Seeing that name reminded me that I had been in a "blind alley" for nearly four years through fathering Wilbur Rawlinson's daughter; and, when I knocked on the front door of Mrs. W. Rawlinson's modern villa, I was still thinking of the things I'd like to do to him—if I ever met him.

The door was opened by a smart maid, so, having already observed a gardener and a chauffeur about the place, I jumped to the conclusion that Mrs. Rawlinson was a fairly wealthy woman.

I was shown into a large, thickly-carpeted room, and a few moments later Mrs. Rawlinson appeared on the scene. She was a plump, middle-aged woman with a babyish voice, and seemed to me to be smothered in jewellery and paint and powder.

I began to rattle out my sales-talk as I assembled the machine, but she stopped me.

"Wait a moment," she said, moving towards the door. "I'll call my husband; he's so clever with machinery, you know."

I didn't know, but I gave her a polite nod and smiled mechanically — then stiffened as she shrilled out: "Wilbur! are you there?" at the top of her babyish voice.

Directly he entered, in spite of the well-clipped moustache he now wore, I knew I was at last face to face with my sister's callous deceiver.

Overcoming a wild desire to pummel the most prominent part of his features to pulp, I managed to launch out my usual sales talk as though nothing had happened. But all the time I was talking and demonstrating, I was studying him—and his plump, middle-aged wife; and I soon had them weighed up.

He—tall, slim, dark, and handsome in a sheik-like way—was nothing more than a gigolo. If they *were* legally married, then he had only married her for her money.

I found out, having taken my leave without making a sale, that they *were* married, and had only been married a year; so I thought no more about informing Mrs. Rawlinson of his love affair with my sister. Nor did I see any sense in making myself known to him, threatening him with exposure if he refused to acknowledge and maintain his child; for I felt certain that that would end up in my being charged with attempted blackmail.

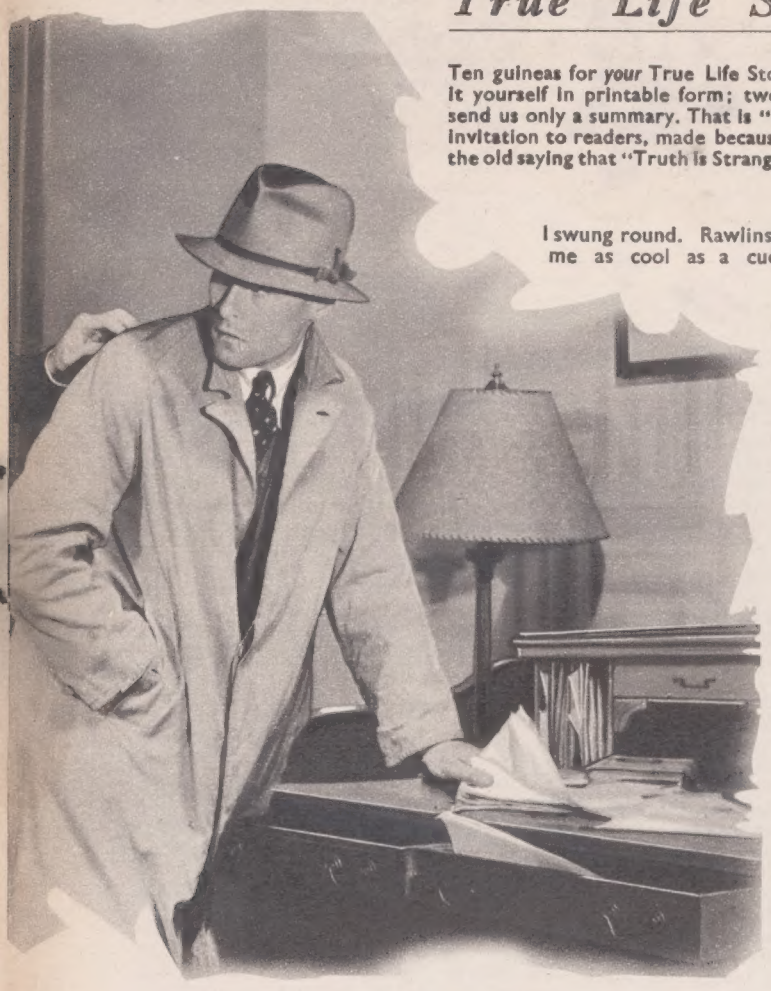
But I was determined to make him pay for all the misery he had caused; and finally, after a particularly bad day, I came to the conclusion that the only way to get money from him was to *take* it.

I waited until it was dark; and then, slipping through a side gate into the garden, crept cautiously round to the back of the house.

There were lights in several of the ground-floor rooms, but it was impossible for me to see into them as they were heavily curtained. I examined several windows, but finding they were securely fastened, decided to try the side-windows; one of which I found to be open at the top.

True Life Stories

Ten guineas for *your* True Life Story if you write it yourself in printable form; two guineas if you send us only a summary. That is "Passing Show's" invitation to readers, made because we believe in the old saying that "Truth is Stranger than Fiction."



I swung round. Rawlinson eyed me as cool as a cucumber

I hesitated, then gently pulled up the lower half. Just as I was about to pull aside the heavy curtain and clamber in, the door opened, and a second later the room was flooded in light. Peering cautiously round the curtain, I saw that it was Wilbur Rawlinson.

He seated himself at a roll-top desk and began to write; then, throwing down the pen, opened a drawer and pulled out a small black case. This he opened and, taking something from it, got up from his chair and walked to the light in the centre of the room. I saw then that it was a brooch—like a butterfly, and studded with glittering stones.

He stood eyeing it thoughtfully for some time, then walked back to the desk and wrote something on a card, placing the brooch and card back into the black case hurriedly as a shrill, babyish voice called out:

"Wilbur, darling!—where are you?"

"All right, Lucy—I'm in the study," he called back, hastily slipping the case into a drawer and pulling some papers towards him which he pretended to peruse.

He looked up with an apologetic smile as his plump wife entered, asking him peevishly if he found her so boring that he couldn't stay in the same room with her for more than half an hour at a time. I smiled to myself when he took her lovingly in his arms.

Directly they left the room—leaving the light on—I scrambled in and hurried across to the desk. None of the drawers were locked, and I searched in every one of them—hoping, of course, to find money. Finding none, I decided to take the butterfly brooch. I slipped the case into my mac pocket—then swung round as I felt a tap on my shoulder.

It was Wilbur Rawlinson.

He eyed me for a moment as cool as a cucumber, just as though he was fed-up with finding burglars in the house.

"You're the vacuum-cleaner man who called to-day, aren't you?" he drawled, sticking his hands into his jacket pockets.

"A wonderful memory you have, Wilbur," I drawled, sticking *my* hands into *my* jacket pockets, but keeping them clenched.

"Listen to me, Wilbur Rawlinson," I said; and then went on to tell him who I was and the reason why I considered myself justified in breaking into his house.

"Very interesting," he murmured, "but I'm not a bit moved by it. I've given dozens of girls photographs — and that proves absolutely nothing. In any case, I don't even remember a girl named Mabel. . . ."

I hesitated, then pulled out the case and opened it.

"Pretty, isn't it? Is it valuable?" I asked, glancing at the card that was with it. It read: "To Molly — the sweetest little woman in the world. Wilbur."

"It *is* valuable," he answered, quite friendly-like. "A special present for my wife, as a matter of fact."

"Hm, you're very considerate," I said, cynically. "Very flattering, too. But then—"

I paused; not because of the glare he gave me, but because I had suddenly remembered something. Then, eyeing him coolly, I said:

"Now . . . supposing you wrote me out a small cheque for, say, fifty pounds? I'd be letting you off lightly, wouldn't I? After all, a magistrate would have made you pay ten shillings a week for your child—and so, really, I ought to press you for twice as much."

"You're talking like a fool," he snapped, but he looked rather worried, I noticed. Smiling, I thrust the brooch-case back into my pocket.

"Very well, Mr. Wilbur Rawlinson; maybe someone else will listen to me."

He eyed me silently, then nodded.

"I don't know how you guessed," he said, "but you win."

And so, I went home the next day with fifty pounds in my pocket—thanks to my good memory.

It was only a little thing I remembered—that he had addressed his wife as *Lucy* while I was watching them from outside—but it turned the scales in my favour. After all, a woman like Mrs. Rawlinson naturally wants her husband to think of *her* as the sweetest woman in the world.

Call it blackmail if you like. Insist that two wrongs don't make a right. All I can say is that it made everything right for me—and Mabel and Wilbur Rawlinson's child.

NEXT WEEK.

● KATHLEEN NORRIS, most popular of women story-tellers has written a long complete story for "The Passing Show's" August Bank Holiday Number. Don't miss

"Parlay Voo, Marie?"

● Murray Smith takes you behind the scenes of a London theatre-restaurant;

Explorer A. R. Lindt describes the Ku Klux Klan of the African Bush, and there are all the usual features.

APPROVED BY THESE MASTER TIMEKEEPERS

The timekeeping standards of the footplate and the control cabin permit of no compromise. Both Captain L. A. Walters, IMPERIAL AIRWAYS Master Pilot No. 1 (above), and Mr. Ben Glasgow, Senior Driver of the famous FLYING SCOTSMAN (right) have approved Services watches.

Photos by permission Imperial Airways, Ltd., and L. & N.E.R. Co.

Why not own a "Services" yourself—steadfast dependability is as much an asset to you as it is a necessity to the men who choose "Services" as a matter of course. Post the coupon for catalogues: 1. Sports Watches. 2. Chronograph. 3. Alarm Clocks.

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"MY DENTIST WAS REALLY CROSS"

"He asked me if I'd been cleaning my teeth with sandpaper — or what? Said the enamel was worn practically through in parts. So now I *never* use rough, abrasive tooth pastes: I use Odol — which the dentist advised. It's amazing how much smoother Odol feels if you test it between your teeth. You *know* Odol can't be scratching — even though it whitens so wonderfully."

ODOL IS SAFE — particles only 1 micron in diameter (4/100,000ths") — no gritty abrasive whatsoever. Odol cannot possibly scratch the enamel. Odol contains peroxide . . . and peroxide whitens teeth safely. Odol contains chlorates, too — they strengthen the gums. Odol keeps teeth clean — and clean teeth are safe teeth. Odol refreshes your mouth with a fresh, pleasant taste.

Odol TOOTH PASTE
Tubes 6d. & 1/-

Let's see your Odol Smile!

£5 CASH and 20 other prizes every week for 'SUNNY SNAPS'

Each week's Competition closes when the final post reaches Cranbux on the Saturday. Winners will be announced in the "Daily Mirror" and "Daily Sketch" the following Friday. The decision of the General Manager of Cranbux Ltd. is final. Write your name on the back of each snap, and post to Cranbux Ltd., ODOL Sunny Snaps (Dept. P.S.1), Norwich. Please mark top left-hand corner of envelope "Competition." The final weekly competition ends on Saturday, October 3rd, 1936.

● *Each snap entered must be accompanied by an empty* ODOL *Tooth Paste Carton, 1/- size, or two 6d. size cartons. Two entries may be sent with a 1/9 size carton. All winning snaps become the property of Cranbux Ltd.; no snaps can be returned. Only amateurs may enter. Entries limited to Gt. Britain and N. Ireland.*

FREE! A TRIAL TUBE OF ODOL TOOTH PASTE

Try an Odol Smile! Post this coupon in an unsealed envelope (½d. stamp) to Cranbux Ltd. (Dept. P.S.1), Norwich, and a trial tube of Odol Tooth Paste will be sent you free and post free.

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etc., removed by the only known **permanent** way in the privacy of your home. Unsightly superfluous hair may be

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never to return, by Dr. Landrae's Famous Home Explator, as used by World's Leading Beauty Clinics. **It never fails.** Safe, harmless. Easy to use as a lipstick. Removes each disfiguring hair root and all **for ever,** without discomfort, leaving the skin soft and lovely. Simplicity itself, a child could use it. **Fully Guaranteed.** The genuine **Dr. Landrae's Explator** costs only **21/- Post Free,** complete with full instructions. Interesting particulars free in plain cover.

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A lovely matt complexion and invisible make-up is the glory of the girl who uses Poudre Mattever, the powder that's true to its name. Weather, sports or dancing cannot affect its beautifying qualities. Obtainable in nine shades from chemists and hairdressers everywhere—price 1/3; together with the other beauty aids of L. T. Piver.

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Stop it!

Your Nails are the index to your Character

NEW NAILS NEXT WEEK! Amazing Discovery, Which Transforms Bitten, Disfigured Nails into Glorious Filberts in 7 Days! Free Booklet sent under plain sealed cover explains how you can quickly, secretly, and permanently cure yourself (or a child) of this objectionable and health-endangering habit. No aloes, no medicine, no auto-suggestion, no appliance. A former addict writes: *"Your treatment has completely cured me after being addicted for 20 years."* Write for the free explanatory booklet NOW enclosing 1½d. stamp for postage.

FILTEX LTD. (Dept. P.S.), 31 Broadway, Crouch End, London, N.8.

NEW HEARTS FOR OLD!

New Courage
To Fight Life

Here is a Specialist's Tonic which makes a real man or woman of you; frazzled nerves full of vim; gloomy thoughts gone; faith strengthens you, hope cheers you, life is worth living again; it is the Doctor's Best Tonic for heart, nerves, stomach and kidneys—it prevents palpitation, faintness, heart failure, tremblings, run-down condition, stops your falling-to-pieces feeling. Don't imagine yourself into an illness; have a good rest, take this tonic and be normal in a few days. Ask for **"Blue Lion Fox Nuts,"** Shadforth Prescription No. 632. Prices: 1/9 (50), 2/6 (72), 4/6 (144).

From your nearest chemist, including Boots, Timothy Whites and Taylors, or Shadforth Prescription Service, Ltd. (Dept. PS83), 49, King William St., London Bridge, E.C.4. (Advt.)

You're Telling Us!

OUR POSTBAG IS inflated with so much hot-air, rising like steam from the sweaty flanks of hysterical correspondents, we suggested to our scientifically-minded friend, Bunsen Burner, we would be serving the needs of suffering humanity if the lights of London, or at least of Finsbury Park, could be lighted by this escaping gas. He was enthralled by the idea. It appears the lamp burning above Big Ben to show the House of Commons is still wrangling in a troubled sleep is lighted by the gas rising from the heated words of that respectable assembly. There seemed no reason to suppose that we could not save millions of pounds a year merely by turning our postbag into a gasbag.

It is, however, with deep regret that we must now report the death of dear old Bunsen Burner, who vanished into murky atmosphere while looking for a leak in the aforementioned postbag with a lighted match. We now learn that the outpourings of our gentle readers are too inflammable to be turned with safety into useful channels. Meanwhile we mourn poor Bunsen Burner, realising (now it is too late) that to be remembered after death is no reward for being treated with derision during life. We are always eager to bestow admiration on the dead, possibly because they can receive no pleasure from such praise, nor can it do them any good.

He has hay fever

STILL, TO RETURN to the gaseous nature of our correspondents' complaints; there is the fellow who is on the verge of flames because some female has lured him into church when the band was playing the Wedding March; there's a sweet young thing who agrees that Yorkshiremen are puling and tacky fellows, and proceeds to tell a lamentable story that we dare not repeat; there's a gentleman, recently returned rather hurriedly from a holiday on Dartmoor, who says with a chuckle that bloodhounds are not always right; there's a Scotsman who wants to know why girls ask him whether he has a motor car; there's a Welsh schoolmaster who has so little else to do that he wants to blow up the local scenery to wake his neighbours; there is the Chinese, writing in French, from Indo-China, who wants the date of our birthday so he can work out our horoscopes; and there's little Harry Taylor, of Leeds, who haltingly suggests, all meek and mild, that he is surprised by the number of people who find something to complain about.

"I live in a busy town," says Honest Harry, "and I am married, too, yet I find nothing to complain about except, perhaps, the weekly scuffle for 'The Passing Show.' Apart from that, everything is O.K." Even our horror at the use of such an Americanism as "O.K." vanishes in the strong, pure light of Harry's simplicity. A few children of the gods have done it, as the Cumaean Sibyl said of going to Hell and coming back, but to most of us poor mortals such contentment is farther than the stars.

Still, it is surprising even to us, as we sit, a bald-headed old anchorite, deep in our scrivening, that so many people must be forever leaping angrily around an invisible cause for complaint. We offer Reginald Horner as proof positive; instead of rejoicing because he can sleep peacefully without fear of pursuing bulls, old school ties, bailiffs, hobgoblins and grass widows, he must lash himself into a frenzy because these pukkah sahibs, the fashionable novelists, are turning "literature into a hotbed of class distinction."

Forget to drop their aspirates

SURELY, A WRITER of detective fiction," says the indignant Reginald E. Horner, "who permits his criminals to use all the most recent discoveries of science in the perpetration of their illegal acts, should be sufficiently well acquainted with the increase in general education as to prevent his expressing surprise when taxicab drivers forget to drop their aspirates or shop assistants claim a knowledge of the poets.

"Nothing is more annoying than such statements as 'She spoke with an educated accent' (what is an educated accent?). 'He was astonished to hear her quote Wordsworth' (why shouldn't she read Wordsworth?). 'Such sentiments from a man of his class were amazing' (shades of the Victorians!). Another thing that proves really painful is the remarkable scale appearing to govern the forms of address used by various ranks in the police force when witnesses are being cross-examined. I am compiling a chart on these lines from various detective stories, but I will spare you all the details.

"In the meantime authors should be reminded that they receive more half-crowns from non-university readers than from the privileged mortals who have graduated and that nothing is gained by gratuitous insult. It is my contention that insidious propaganda such as this goes far to keep alive the spirit of snobbery; that which people read in their leisure hours plays a great part in colouring their outlook on life in general."

IT WOULD APPEAR that ranting Reginald is one of those surly fellows who takes more pleasure out of just hating whatever he has to read than of admitting there was something to it. He reminds us of these righteous old gentlemen who become all heated in the public prints because of some book or painting that they think will turn the nation's thoughts to undesirable delicacies. If the book or painting was left unloved and unsung to die the death natural to such phenomena, there would never be a chance of its damaging our immortal souls.

But the righteous must rise on their back legs, and dance such a fandango of rage on its mangled body, that half the world wants to inquire deeply into the root of the evil. We would remind Reginald Horner that even though civilisation is only an attempt to correct the blunders of nature, tolerance is one of its great necessities.

AND NOW LET US TURN to the troubles of J. C. Squire, whose thrilling life story, "Rhapsody in Red," has caused him to be deluged by admirers, eager to praise, to ask his advice, and to recall old friendships.

"Please thank them all for writing to me," says "Jack" in an S O S broadcast from beneath a growing mountain of "fan" mail. "I'm writing to most of them, but it is impossible to answer all these letters." So we leave him, faced by one of the toughest tasks in a career that has never been without its difficulties.

CURTAIN, BY SOMERSET DAWN. Jane admits her love of John, but she refuses either to run away with him or to murder her husband. "If you'll only be patient he'll sneeze himself to death," she whispers hoarsely. "He has hay-fever. Each morning he sneezes an extra sneeze. Each night his heart is weaker."

While John is rolling his eyes, soft, elfin musick is heard off-stage, and in trips a gentleman, probably Boris Karloff, disguised as himself, wearing a long white coat. "Oh, doctor, what news is there for us?" chant the guilty couple.

"I have good news for you, madam," says the white-coated one as he thrusts a bottle under her eyes. "I have found a cure for hay-fever . . ."

Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed. Address: "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 31 Bow Street, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs. or Miss.

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Solution Next Week

CLUES DOWN

1. Punishment for someone.
2. So is the holly.
3. A conifer among the discontented.
4. Time measure.
5. May take a sprat but would need a big one for a whale.
6. Egyptian goddess or English river.
7. Appertaining to very small particles.
8. Line of communication.
9. Very ornamental or possibly flowery rhetoric.
10. I so make an equal prefix.
13. Mainly stock in Leicestershire.
14. Eve in a Kentish village.
16. Nothing omitted.
20. Was a queen.
22. Final sort of word.
23. The babe falls out (hidden)
24. Pedantic departure.
26. A deep red.
29. Something not here.
31. May include seven seas.
32. Maybe bon.
36. Ornament of 36 across.
40. Good card.
41. May hold the door or may have a tender.
42. Tail of 44.
43. A little short of licensed house.

D	I	S	S	E	N	T	E	D	A	P	T	S		
E	D	I	T	E		N	U	T	R	I	E	N	T	
E	L	D	E	R	S		D	R	O	O	P	S		U
P	E	E	R	E	S	S	E	S		S	E	T	O	N
E	S	S	E	N		H	A	T	T	E	R		F	
N		O	T	H	E	R		H		S	A	F	E	
	R	O	S	E		D		S	R		E			
F	I	A	C	R	E		B	O	O	S	T	I	N	G
A	C	R	O	S	S		I	N	N	E	R		D	
K	E	E	P		T	A	N	G	E	R	I	N	E	S
E		D	E	W		N		S		F	O	O	D	

Solution to last week's puzzle.

CLUES ACROSS

1. A lemon-icer (anagram).
11. Rave to declare.
12. Hiss table to found.
15. Detachment or removal from contiguity.
17. Musical instrument.
18. Take three out of 25.
19. Blots on the copy-book maybe.
21. Very base.
25. Trine for a salt.
27. It's a bird.
28. Plain speaking.
30. Gaseous state.
33. Tail of 27.
34. Suggestion of pal in ablutions (initials).
35. See cast out (anagram).
36. Covers a multitude.
37. Half of 43 across.
38. For fear that this will suffice.
39. Nutrient suggestion in 44.
42. Cry of dejection from a girl.
43. Past Peruvian.
44. Trim we may say.
45. Something precedes something.

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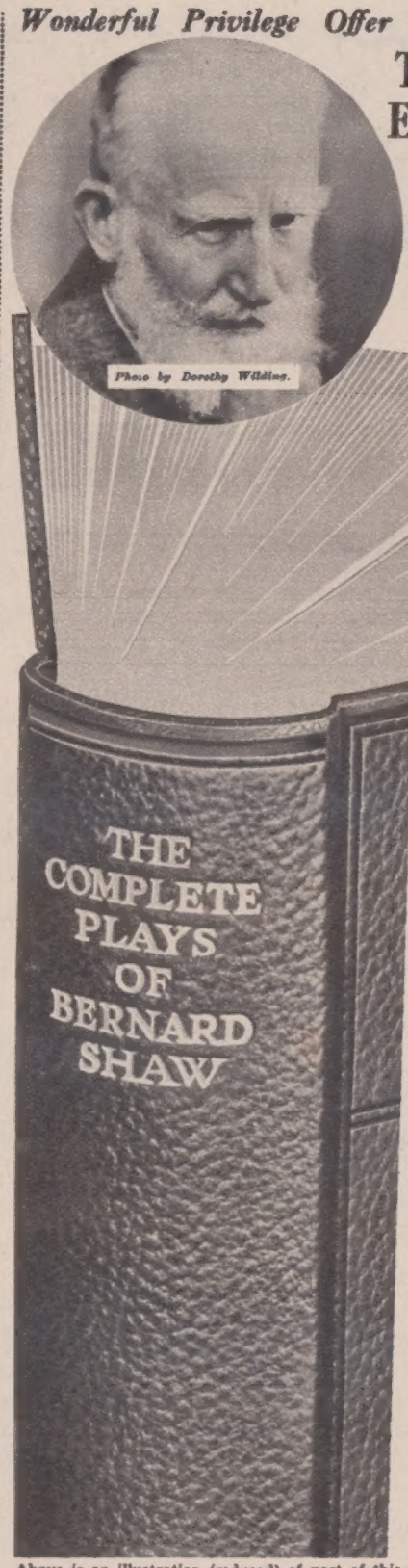

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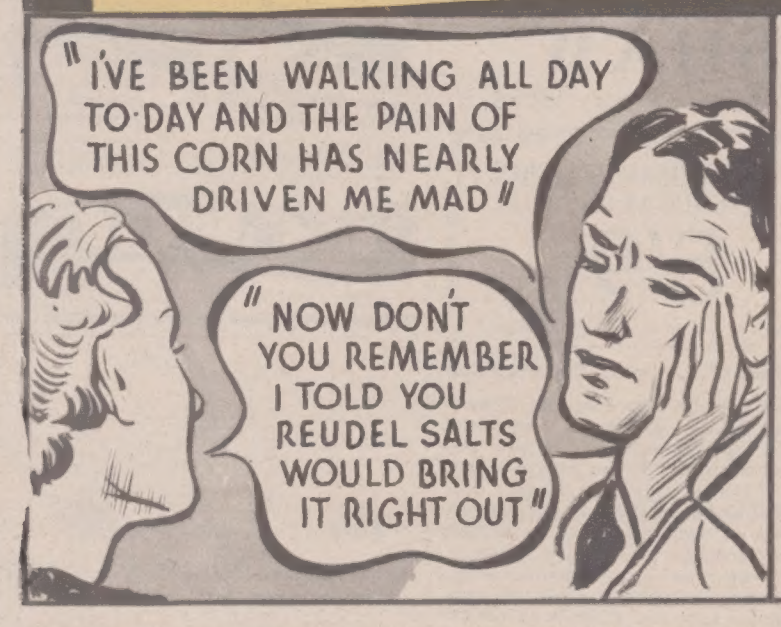

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